

269,744 Jordanians return from Kuwait

AMMAN (R) — More than a quarter of a million Jordanians have fled to Amman from Kuwait since the start of the Gulf crisis, a senior official said Saturday. He said 269,744 arrived between Iraq's invasion on Aug. 2 and July 15, putting a huge strain on Jordan's already limited resources and straining its economy. "For the country this is a catastrophe of the highest level but you cannot stop citizens from returning," the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters. "We still expect thousands of others to come from Kuwait after they collect their money and settle their affairs, because life there has become impossible for them." The Palestinian minister in Kuwait says the Palestinian community has shrunk to 90,000 from 350,000 before the invasion. Many if not most are Jordanian passport-holders. Kuwait has terminated the contracts of tens of thousands of Palestinian civil servants. Officials often refer to the recent flood as the "third wave of immigration," to Jordan following mass arrivals after the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967.

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UNHCR 'appalled' by Ethiopian camps

ADDIS ABABA (AP) — The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says she is "saddened and appalled" by conditions in Ethiopian refugee camps. After visiting four camps in western and eastern Ethiopia, Sadako Ogata told reporters Saturday she had seen "shocking signs of malnutrition" and "extremely high rates of tuberculosis, pneumonia, and mortality among children." The commissioner said very little food except wheat was reaching most of the isolated camps and there was an urgent need for supplementary food.

U.N. official holds talks in Greece

ATHENS (R) — A senior U.N. official, in Greece to seek progress on the Cyprus problem, said Saturday that a quick solution could only be reached if the parties wanted it. "I believe it will be good to have a solution before the end of the year, but of course it depends on the political will of the parties," Oscar Camille, special representative of U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, told reporters. The Cyprus issue is very difficult. We must at least convince the parties to negotiate," he said after a meeting with Greek Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras. Mr. Camille and his aide, Gustave Feissel, held talks in Turkey Friday. They will also visit Cyprus.

Kabul seeks Islamic bona fide

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Soviet-backed Afghan government is seeking Syrian help to regain its place in the 45-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Bakhtar news agency reported Saturday. Prime Minister Fazl Haq Khaliqyar made the request for help to Syrian Vice-President Zuheir Masharqa when they met in Kabul Friday, it said. The Jeddah-based OIC, suspended Afghanistan after the December 1989 Soviet military intervention that put a new pro-Moscow government in power in Kabul. Bakhtar said Mr. Masharqa assured Mr. Khaliqyar that Syria would "try its utmost" to achieve expansion of Afghanistan's relations with other Islamic countries and restoration of its OIC membership.

Tunisian league assails press freedom curbs

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian Human Rights League Saturday assailed the government of violating press freedom. A league statement expressed "very keen displeasure" with the "serious deterioration of freedoms of the press and of opinion such as never seen before" in Tunisia. It said numerous organs of opinion and opposition had disappeared, radio and television were not independent and there was widespread censorship. The league denounced what it called a ban on publication of its own statements. Opposition papers, which appeared in the early 1980s, and since President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali seized power in November 1987, ceased publication last year. Censorship was imposed on the written press at the beginning of the Gulf crisis last August. Last month the government daily La Presse said the measure would be relaxed.

Iraqi Communists urge U.N. to lift exports ban

DAMASCUS (R) — The exiled Iraqi Communist Party appealed to the U.N. Security Council Saturday to allow Iraq to sell oil to pay for food and medicine. "Isolating or besieging a dictatorship should not be done by starving and subjecting our people," the Syrian-based party said in a statement marking the first anniversary of Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. The U.N. has lifted the Gulf war embargo on the sale of food and medicine to Iraq but Baghdad says it needs oil revenue to pay for them.

Masri: Jordan has guarantee Israel will return territory

Premier reaffirms Kingdom has not and will not deviate from its principled stand

Combined Agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordan has received guarantees that Israel will return occupied Arab territories as part of any Middle East peace settlement. Prime Minister Taher Masri said Saturday. "Jordan has received guarantees that Resolution 242 meant Israel's withdrawal from Arab territories, that the annexation of Jerusalem is illegal although there is a problem over the participation of the sons of Jerusalem in a Palestinian delegation, and that they had the right to vote on their future like those from the West Bank and Gaza Strip," Mr. Masri told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Mr. Masri did not say who gave the guarantees. Officials said they had asked the United States to state in writing the meaning of Resolution 242 and 338 and to pledge they would be the basis of any settlement. Syria, the first Arab country to accept U.S. proposals for a peace conference, said Thursday President George Bush had given it assurances that Israel would have to withdraw "on all fronts" in return for peace with the Arabs. The United States has said Resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to withdraw from occupied territories, in exchange for peace, will be the basis for any settlement. Israel refuses to give up the occupied territories.

Arab East Jerusalem is at present the main obstacle to convening a conference. Israel, which claims "sovereignty" over the whole of the occupied Holy City, insists Arab Jerusalem Palestinians be excluded from a Palestinian delegation while Palestinians demand their inclusion.

New IAEA mission arrives in Iraq amid fresh allegations

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A new U.N. team arrived Saturday to reinvestigate Iraq's nuclear programme after an earlier group reported that Baghdad may still be hiding weapons production sites the allies have threatened to strike.

The team, made up of 18 scientists and technicians, planned to spend two weeks visiting various sites in Iraq. This is the fourth such U.N. mission since the Security Council declared a formal ceasefire to the Gulf war April 3.

The council resolution that laid out terms for a ceasefire specified that the United Nations would investigate Iraq's programmes to produce nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and destroy any such facilities.

David Kay, the chief inspector, said Saturday his team, attached to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, would visit numerous sites, but would not disclose the locations.

"The whole idea is that they should be surprise inspections," he said.

The group was expected to meet with Iraqi officials later Saturday and begin its inspection visits Sunday.

Maurizio Zifferero, the inspection team coordinator, said earlier the team's mission was to "try to clarify the extent of the centrifuge programme" in which Iraq making weapons-grade uranium. The previous inspection team issued a report Friday saying investigators on a July 7-18 mission discovered a plant at Tarmiya, Iraq, that could have produced up to 15 kilograms a year of enriched uranium, which is used to make nuclear weapons. Mr. Kay said Saturday that was possible — if all the equipment had been installed and function-

"The sons of Jerusalem have to be represented in any delegation," Mr. Masri said.

He said Jordan, which accepted the U.S. plan last weekend, supported the idea of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation but would also back the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) if it decided on a separate team.

"We are committed to whatever the Palestinians want," he added.

Mr. Masri stressed that there was no deviation from Jordan's principled stand towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem and vowed that the Kingdom would never give up its principles.

The prime minister said Jordan's position also included a firm demand for an international peace conference on the Middle East and recognition of the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Jordan, Mr. Masri said, "has its idiosyncrasy and significance because of its closeness to the Palestinian issue."

"It (Jordan) is affected by it and with it (the Palestinian cause) all the time and what happens in the occupied Arab territories has its impact in Jordan more than in any other Arab country," he pointed out. "Thus the way Jordan deals with the political situation is different from those of other countries," he added.

"Jordan is committed to what the Palestinians want ... and the Jordanian government is currently holding consultations with the PLO on the recent peace efforts. Whoever says that Jordan has changed its position on the PLO is untrue," he said.

The prime minister pointed out to the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and said the repressive measures under which they live threaten their existence, land and identity.

Mr. Masri said despite the fact that the U.S.-proposed peace conference is not called an international peace conference, it is still not a regional conference as is said.

"It is a peace conference in which the 12-member European Community, a representative of the U.N. secretary general, the two super-powers and all the parties to the Middle East conflict will be taking part and the basis for holding the conference will be Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in order to reach a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict," he said.

He added that the final formula for holding the conference was not decided yet and the issue of the Palestinian representation at the conference was also not settled.

In related developments: — Egypt said Saturday the future of Arab Jerusalem should not be excluded from proposed peace talks.

"East Jerusalem is part of the occupied Arab territories. What applies for occupied lands in West Bank, Gaza and the Golan (Heights) applies to it," Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters.

President Hosni Mubarak's chief political adviser, Osama Al Baz, has echoed Palestinian suggestions that Jerusalem could be jointly run by Israelis and Palestinians.

(Continued on page 2)

Israel says U.S. denying having given any assurance to Syria over Golan

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's foreign ministry said Saturday that U.S. Ambassador to Israel William Brown denied there was an American assurance to Syria that Israel would have to withdraw from the occupied Golan Heights.

"Brown denied the news items according to which (U.S. President George) Bush in a letter to (Syrian President Hafez Al) Assad said he would make Israel withdraw from the Golan Heights," foreign ministry spokesman Barukh Binah told Reuters.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said Thursday that Mr. Bush had given Damascus assurances that Israel would have to withdraw on all fronts in return for peace with Arabs.

On Friday Mr. Sharaa said U.S. commitment to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East had persuaded Syria to agree in talks with Israel on the basis of land for peace. Israel has said it will only respond to U.S. proposals for the talks — already accepted by Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states — after the makeup of the Palestinian delegation is clear.

Syria's agreement to attend the talks has been seen as a breakthrough putting the burden of continuing the peace process on Israel.

Mr. Brown made the denial Friday during a routine daily conversation with Eitan Benteur, the foreign ministry deputy head for North American affairs, Mr. Binah said.

No U.S. embassy officials were immediately available for comment.

A U.S. official said Thursday Washington believed U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 applied to "all the fronts" and therefore it did not recognize Israel's "annexation" of the Golan Heights.

The opening meeting would break

Washington has said from the outset that Middle East peace efforts should be based on U.N. resolutions calling for Israel to exchange land seized in 1967 for peace with its Arab neighbours.

Israel in response has said that all parties are entitled to their own interpretation of the resolutions.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir this week repeated that he did not believe in the land-for-peace formula — on any front.

Opposition Labour leader Shimon Peres voiced concern that Mr. Shamir would not achieve Arab-Israeli peace.

"If Mr. Shamir goes to Mr. Assad and says I offer you peace for peace, tell me ... is this serious? Mr. Peres asked, referring to Mr. Shamir's repeated refusals to cede land for peace.

"In my opinion, if you invite Mr. Assad and tell him he will not get anything there is no logic in the invitation," Mr. Peres said. "But with this, I wouldn't say beforehand that I am ready to concede this or that."

Mr. Peres also hinted that Mr. Shamir was influenced by his right-wing coalition partners.

"We know the opinions of Rehavam Zeevi, Gula Cohen, Yuval and Rafal," Mr. Peres said, referring to the three parties that threatened to bolt the coalition if "concessions" were made.

"He (Mr. Shamir) invited them one by one and they all left satisfied. What do you want, that this will make me greatly optimistic?" Mr. Peres asked.

The U.S. format for peace talks reportedly calls for an opening meeting to be attended by foreign ministers of seven countries: The United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

The Dutch foreign minister would represent European nationals.

The opening meeting would break

Cabinet reforms economic council

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet decided Saturday to reform the Economic Consultancy Council. The council provides consultancy and advice in economic, financial and monetary domains and presents proposals and recommendations needed to activate the economic and social growth processes. According to the decision, the council will be chaired by the prime minister and will comprise as members the ministers of finance, planning, trade, industry and supply, the Central Bank of Jordan governor, the president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, the president of the chambers of commerce, president of the Contractors Association, president of the Farmers Association, Khalid Shoman, Jawad Hadid, Ismail Abdul Rahman, Khalil Abu Khourma and Fahed Al Funek. The Cabinet also approved the political parties law and will refer it to the National Security Council.

Madagascar opposition defiant

ANTANANARIVO (R) — Madagascar's opposition forces reacted defiantly to the arrest of another of their leader Saturday, vowing to continue their protest campaign and force President Didier Ratsiraka to quit.

Albert Zafy, "prime minister" in a shadow government named last week by the opposition, was arrested shortly after dawn at his home in the capital Antananarivo, his wife said.

"There struggle must go on," Therese Zafy told a cheering crowd of tens of thousands of protesters who gathered a few hours later in the city centre.

Mr. Zafy was the sixth opposition leader to be arrested this week by a government battling to curb a tide of unrest which has thrown the Indian Ocean island into turmoil.

Mrs. Therese Zafy said a group of more than 70 heavily-armed men arrived at their home and took her husband away.

"He was not afraid. He told them he is not a criminal, he is doing this for the people," she told the crowd in May 13 Square, hub of a seven-week campaign of strikes and protests which has put Mr. Ratsiraka under unprecedented pressure to step down.

"He is just there to save the people from the poverty and dictatorship of Ratsiraka," she said. "Ratsiraka, out," chanted back the crowd.

The opposition active forces coalition, which this week occupied seven government ministry buildings in the capital, broke off church-mediated talks with the government Friday because of the arrests, saying they would not resume negotiations until their colleagues were released.

Spokesmen for the coalition said they expected more leaders to be arrested soon but said the protests would not stop as the movement was strong enough to replace them.

"We're continuing despite the latest arrest. If they take us all, there are always people to replace us," Frederic Anona, "higher education minister" in the shadow government, told Reuters.

Four of the shadow ministers are among the six opposition leaders detained.

Israel says it will not discuss Lebanon with Syria as Assad, Hrawi begin talks

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi began talks in Damascus Saturday with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. It was their first meeting since a cooperation treaty between Syria and Lebanon took effect on May 22.

Mr. Hrawi travelled from Beirut by road and was joined in the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon by Prime Minister Omar Karani and Speaker of Parliament Hussein Huseini.

A Syrian presidential spokesman said Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Prime Minister Mahmoud Zu'bi were attending the Hrawi-Assad meeting.

The meeting came as Israel Radio reported that Israel refuses to discuss with Syria issues concerning Lebanon during U.S.-proposed peace talks.

One of the topics for the meeting between Mr. Assad and Mr. Hrawi was ways of bringing U.S.

pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw from a buffer zone it holds in South Lebanon.

Political sources told Israel Radio Saturday that Israel had informed the United States it would not discuss issues concerning Lebanon with Syria as that would recognise Syria's right "to do as it pleased in Lebanon."

Avi Pazner, a top aide to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, denied any such message was sent to the United States, but added that the report did not contradict the government position.

"It is logical that we would discuss with Syria issues between us and them, and with Lebanon issues concerning us and them, but we didn't issue any such statement," Mr. Pazner said.

Lebanon is expected to demand Israel withdraw from a 1,100-square-kilometre "security zone" it carved out as a buffer against cross-border guerrilla

raids in 1985.

Israel has said it would not consider withdrawing unless Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas leave the area and Syria pulls its 40,000 soldiers out of Lebanon.

Lebanon's most influential Shiite Muslim cleric has rejected the U.S.-initiated Middle East peace plan, saying it would strip the Arabs of their rights and accomplish Israel's strategic interests.

"America wants Israel to be the superpower in the region at the expense of Arab and Islamic rights," Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah said in his Friday sermon at the Imam Reza Mosque in south Beirut.

Lengthy excerpts of the sermon were published by Beirut newspapers Saturday.

Sheikh Fadlallah is the spiritual

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Two Palestinians killed in occupied West Bank and Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinians said Saturday that Israeli undercover troops shot dead a Palestinian near Tularm in the occupied West Bank late Friday night.

They said Iyad Nimer Isa Sabah, 22, was killed while a 15-year-old youth was wounded in the same ambush.

A military official said shots were fired at an army patrol from a speeding subaru near Tularm Friday night. Troops returned fire but the attackers escaped.

In a separate report the official said Sabah, whose age he gave as 18, was brought to hospital in Tularm with another injured youth. He said Sabah, who was wanted by the occupation authorities, later died of his wounds.

Israel Radio said Sabah might have been involved in the attack on the army patrol.

In the Gaza Strip refugee camp of Nuseirat, unknown men shot dead Abdul Hassan Jarawi, Palestinian sources said.

Troops imposed a curfew on Ramallah in the West Bank after a dud hand grenade was thrown

at an Israeli patrol in the city, military officials said.

In the Jewish settlement of Otniel near Hebron in the West Bank a pipe-bomb damaged a house Friday night but no one was hurt, the officials said.

Army radio said troops conducted searches for Palestinian activists in Yatta village near Otniel Saturday. It said 30 were arrested.

Curfews stayed in force in Gaza's Shatia refugee camp and the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City following the worst protests in Sheikh Radwan since the Gulf war.

Mohammad Abu Ita, 21, one of five Palestinians wounded when troops clashed with hundreds of demonstrators there, remained in a coma in hospital, Saturday, Palestinians said.

Hundreds of Palestinians in Sheikh Radwan built roadblocks and threw stones at soldiers and border police in a two-hour confrontation. Soldiers responded with tear-gas and live ammunition.

At least four other Palestinians

were injured in the clashes and Palestinian sources said there were similar demonstrations in other parts of the Gaza Strip.

Witnesses said hundreds of young men, many of them masked, poured out of mosques encouraged on by at least one imam (religious leader) who announced over a loudspeaker: "Our Sheikh Radwan heroes, take to the streets to jihad (holy war)."

Soldiers failed to quell the wave even after reinforcements arrived, Palestinians said. They pulled back from the neighbourhood and imposed a curfew on the areas.

The Islamic Hamas movement in the occupied territories issued leaflets this week calling for escalated resistance against authorities on July 21 and 26 to commemorate historical Muslim battles.

Hamas wields the most influence among the various Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian sources describe Sheikh Radwan as a stronghold of the movement.

UN says oil-sale controls will violate its sovereignty

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq has complained to the Security Council president that controls envisaged for monitoring its sale of Iraqi oil to buy food and other necessities would infringe on its sovereignty.

After a meeting with Iraqi U.N. Representative Abdul Amir Al Anbari, the council president, Ricardo Alarcon of Cuba, said: "He perceives this as a very serious threat to Iraqi sovereignty."

A number of council members have stressed the need for close U.N. supervision of any Iraqi oil sales, as well as of the purchase and distribution of humanitarian supplies, to ensure there is no diversion by the Baghdad government.

Mr. Alarcon said he expected Mr. Anbari would raise his objections with other council members.

They have only just begun to consider privately whether to allow Iraq to sell some of its U.N.-embargoed oil, not only to buy badly needed civilian supplies but also to pay for the U.N.-supervised elimination of Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction, to meet half the costs of a U.N. commission demarcating the Kuwait-Iraq border, and to feed a U.N. war reparations fund.

No resolution has yet been drafted and there is no indication yet how much oil Iraq might eventually be allowed to sell.

Turkey may play a crucial role in the monitoring of any Iraqi oil exports by allowing the use of two oil pipelines closed down last year, a government official said in Ankara.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the twin pipelines seemed to be the

only outlet for the Iraqi oil exports if the Security Council allows Iraq to sell some oil.

Iraq's other pipeline links to Saudi Arabia and Syria were destroyed by allied bombs in the Gulf war.

The Turkish official said the government was waiting for a U.N. decision before allowing the use of the pipelines. He added that the pipelines were technically ready to start functioning.

The Security Council reached an informal agreement Thursday to tightly monitor any Iraqi oil exports it permits, but the council recessed after closed consultations without deciding whether to allow the sales. No date was set for a new meeting.

Turkey shut down two Iraqi pipelines in accordance with the U.N. embargo against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait a year ago. It also ended trade with Iraq. As a result, Turkey suffered an economic loss estimated at \$7 billion.

The Istanbul daily Hurriyet reported Friday that Turkey was planning to organise a barter system with Iraq. In exchange for oil, Turkey would provide other goods.

A Turkish official said the two pipelines had an operational capacity of 1.5 million barrels of crude daily. He estimated that the pipelines would have to function about 250 days in order to carry the amount of crude Iraq wants to sell.

The parallel pipelines run from the Kirkuk fields to a terminal at Yumurtalik on the eastern coast of Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

After the war, President Turgut Ozal said he had personally intervened with the allies to spare the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline.

Britain says nuclear exports to Iraq were not for military use

LONDON (R) — The government of Prime Minister John Major, facing political uproar over licences for nuclear exports to Iraq, said Saturday the chemicals involved were cleared by experts as having no military end use.

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Lilley said items which appeared on a government list, authorising nuclear exports to Iraq until three days after its invasion of Kuwait last August, were allowed only after stringent checks.

The list, which appeared as part of evidence submitted by the Department of Trade and Industry to a parliamentary committee, investigating British exports to Iraq, included materials vital to any nuclear weapons programme.

Two grammes of uranium could not conceivably make a bomb but could save a child's life, Mr. Lilley told reporters.

"Permission would for instance have been given for the export of tiny quantities of radioactive chemicals for use, for example, in or as an integral part of medical equipment," Mr. Lilley said in a statement released by his department.

In some cases, Mr. Lilley said, licences were for temporary exports whereby substances were to be returned to Britain after use in Iraq.

It was not clear whether any of

the authorised exports actually reached Iraq.

Mr. Lilley's statement said licences were examined by his department, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Energy, depending on the nature of the case.

Permission would be granted to export chemicals only if departments were satisfied that "they were to be used for non-military purposes."

The list also covered the export of chemicals which could be used to make poison gas and material which could be used to make armour-piercing shells, scientists said.

"I was astounded at the list and what was on the list," said Kenneth Warren, the Conservative MP chairing the committee.

Opposition parties immediately sought to embarrass Mr. Major, whose government has been rocked by a scandal over the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) after an alleged multi-billion-dollar fraud.

"The prime minister should now provide an immediate explanation of how highly dangerous materials, including plutonium, depleted uranium and other nuclear-sensitive materials, reached Iraq," said opposition Labour Party spokesman Gordon Brown.

Minister says Iraqi farmers are withholding produce

BAGHDAD (R) — Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh said Iraqi farmers were pushing up food prices by withholding grain from the government to sell privately.

Mr. Saleh, in an interview published in the army newspaper Al Qadisiya Saturday, said traders were also to blame for the high prices, which are forcing many families to spend almost all their income on food.

The government decreed in May that farmers must sell all their wheat, barley, maize and rice to government agencies for distribution to consumers through the ration system.

But Mr. Saleh said many farmers were not complying. "After the harvest most farmers have kept their products and have taken what they need for one year, some for replanting and some for feeding their animals," he said.

"Some have been sold (privately) and the rest, which is full of dirt, has been sold to the government," he said.

Mr. Saleh said the government was unable to dictate prices to the local market. "If we ask merchants to charge a lower price they will stop supplying such goods to the market and then the market will lose but the merchants will lose nothing."

He said that to overcome this problem government stores had started selling some food over and above the rations at lower prices than the merchants in the open market.

Grain is in short supply because of U.N. sanctions in force since last August.

The price of flour on the black market has been up to 100 times the price charged at government shops.

Iraq, which imported about 70 per cent of its food needs before the Gulf crisis, has asked the U.N. to allow it to sell oil to buy food and medicines.

A U.N. fact-finding team led by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan reported earlier this month that Iraq's cereal harvest was likely to be one third of last year's.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEF

Bush ends freeze of Kuwaiti assets

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush Friday signed executive orders releasing Kuwaiti assets that were blocked after Iraq's invasion nearly a year ago and continued sanctions against Baghdad, the White House announced. Mr. Bush said he extended the emergency order to be issued against Iraq soon after its invasion of Kuwait last Aug. 2 "because the government of Iraq has continued its activities hostile to U.S. interests in the Middle East." The order keeps the trade ban in place and continues the freeze on Iraqi assets. In a separate directive, Mr. Bush said Iraq's ouster from Kuwait and the reinstatement of the Kuwaiti government had eliminated the need for continuing a freeze on billions of dollars of Kuwaiti assets in the United States. The assets had been frozen last Aug. 9 to prevent Iraq from gaining access to them. "Those orders were issued to protect the assets of the government of Kuwait which were subject to United States jurisdiction, and to prevent the transfer of benefits by United States persons to Iraq based upon its invasion of Kuwait," the directive said.

'Satanic Verses' to appear in Polish

WARSAW (R) — A Polish version of Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" will go on sale this year but the translator's name will be kept secret following attacks on Mr. Rushdie's Japanese and Italian translators, the publishers say. The official news agency PAP said on Saturday the edition to be brought out by publisher Phantom-Press International this autumn was the last for which the novel's copyright holder had agreed to sell foreign language rights. Mr. Rushdie was forced into hiding in February 1989 after Iran's late spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered his death for blasphemy against Islam. The Japanese translator of "The Satanic Verses" was stabbed to death earlier this month, just days after the Italian translator was stabbed and seriously injured at his Milan flat.

Doctors fix hole in Ozal's eye

ISTANBUL (R) — Doctors found a hole in the retina of Turkish President Turgut Ozal's left eye and treated it with lasers, his doctor said Friday night. Mr. Ozal, who had gone to hospital for a routine checkup, is in good condition, doctor Cengiz Aslan said. He has left hospital and gone to an officers' club to rest, Turkish radio said. Mr. Ozal, who had eye surgery in the United States in 1988, cancelled a trip Saturday to southeastern Turkey, where he was to open a water tunnel from the Ataturk Dam.

Egyptians complain of beatings in Kuwait

CAIRO (R) — Twenty-four Egyptians returning to Cairo from prisons in Kuwait said they had been beaten and many more Egyptians remained in detention there, the daily Al Gomhouriya reported Saturday. Ayman Al Ashoul, 27, a driver from Alexandria, said a group of Egyptians working in Iraq had walked across the border into Kuwait under heavy allied bombardment during the Gulf war. In mid-March, Kuwaiti police threw them into prison and started beating them with sticks and iron rods. Another returnee, "Eid Hassan Mursi from the Nile Delta town of Mansoura, said many Egyptians were still in Kuwaiti custody, ill from privation and beatings. A foreign ministry spokesman said no precise figures were immediately available for how many Egyptians were now resident in Kuwait, or how many were still being held in Kuwaiti prisons. "In the confusion that followed the end of the war, we can understand that some Egyptians may have suffered by mistake," he told Reuters. "But there are many Egyptians now back in Kuwait taking up their responsibilities there."

NASA: No global effect from Kuwaiti fires

MOUNTAIN VIEW, California (R) — Scientists at the U.S. space agency said Friday they do not expect any global atmospheric changes to result from the smoke pouring out of Kuwaiti burning oil wells. Researchers at the Ames Research Centre, a division of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said they flew in May and June through the smoke rising from oil wells to study the interaction of solar radiation with the smoke. The scientists said their data showed that climatic effects from the smoke will be limited to the Gulf region. Temperatures on the ground below the smoke had dropped about several degrees below normal, while temperatures inside the plume was much higher than normal. "No global effects are foreseen," NASA said in a prepared statement.

Masri: Jordan has guarantee

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"We're saying that an acceptable formula could be reached... where, with unity (of the city's administration) its sovereignty would be split," he said in remarks published Friday.

Leading Arab Jerusalem activist Faisal Al Hussein suggested dual sovereignty over the city in Paris Thursday after talks with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas.

Mr. Musa said Egypt backed Jordanian-Palestinian efforts to form a joint negotiating team and hoped Israel would agree to take part in talks. But he said any agreement should indicate a willingness to implement Resolution 242.

Mr. Musa is due to hold talks with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Cairo Monday.

President Mubarak said Friday there was an even chance of a Middle East peace conference being held.

Asked about meeting French President Francois Mitterrand what the chances were of such a meeting, Mr. Mubarak told reporters: "Fifty-fifty."

Mr. Mubarak criticised Israel's refusal to allow Arab Jerusalem Palestinians to be part of a Palestinian delegation to a conference.

"Raising the question of East Jerusalem is simply trying to complicate everything and block the convocation of a conference," he said.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat opened a meeting Friday of the PLO's Executive Committee, which charged that American-led efforts to organise a peace conference are ignoring the Palestinians.

The meeting to discuss "all the political developments in the Near East" could last for several days, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

The statement in the name of the committee challenged U.S. President George Bush to seek a balanced settlement between the Palestinians and Israel.

"Our people demand that they be treated equally with other people, and benefit from the same right to self-determination conforming to international law," the communiqué said.

The statement questioned how Mr. Bush in a speech Thursday could call on both Israelis and Palestinians to take advantage of the situation to further peace and attain their legitimate rights.

"While we see that Israel gets all the guarantees it wants... what is being offered to us amounts to no more than our acquiescing to our exclusion and the exclusion of our rights, and the absence of a

Washington Saturday of siding with Israel by endorsing the exclusion of the PLO and Arab Jerusalem Palestinians from peace talks.

Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) said his group was treating "with full flexibility" an appeal from President Bush for Palestinians to support peace talks.

But Mr. H. Hawatmeh, in an interview with Reuters, urged similar flexibility from the United States.

"We are realistic," Mr. Hawatmeh said. "The grand dreams (of destroying Israel and setting up a Palestinian state in its place) stopped a long time ago. But realism is one thing and hoisting the white flag is another."

Mr. Hawatmeh said that according to his information, Washington was relegating Palestinians expected to take part in a peace conference to a sub-listed delegation that would not even be part of a joint team with Jordan.

If this were accepted, "it means that the PLO is forgotten and wiped out from the political maps in the Middle East and the world as a whole."

Israel says no assurance to Syria

(Continued from page 1)

states and wanted "to start them now."

The premier placed special significance on talks with Jordan, Syria and the Palestinians, telling a Canadian delegation that "we must especially talk with Syria and Jordan and find a formula for coexistence with the Palestinians."

However, Mr. Shamir acknowledged that "there are still a lot of questions that need to be clarified" before peace talks could go ahead.

Mr. Shamir told the Canadian delegation that he welcomed Syria's willingness to negotiate with the Jewish state.

"There are still obstacles, but I hope that with good will and the will to achieve peace, we will be able to sit together around the negotiating table," he added.

Israel: No talks on Lebanon with Syria

(Continued from page 1)

guide of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God), which is engaged in guerrilla attacks on Israeli troops occupying the border strip in the south.

He also attacked President Hrawi's government for agreeing to take part in the Middle East peace conference proposed by the United States.

"The cabinet has agreed to attend the proposed peace conference with no clear objective. This move is self-defeating. It virtually linked the implementation of Resolution 425 to the Middle East conflict although the government is striving to segregate the two issues," Sheikh Fadallah said.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978 calls for total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

Gulf war relief starts debate on U.N. emergency response

GENEVA (R) — The Gulf crisis, which triggered a series of refugee crises, highlighted the need for swifter United Nations action in emergencies and prompted a big power call for a humanitarian overlord.

But the idea has met a mixed response from the international relief community.

While independent agencies say a U.N. supreme would cut through red tape to get food and medicines to refugees swiftly, U.N. agencies say such a role would slow down relief efforts. Third World nations fear infringements of their sovereignty.

When millions of Kurds and Shi'ite Muslims fled Iraq after the war, bureaucracy, poor coordination and inter-agency competition hampered the work of specialised U.N. bodies, independent relief organisations and donor nations say.

They say U.N. agencies moved in long after non-governmental organisations were providing food, medicine and shelter to refugees huddled on desolate mountaintops straddling Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran.

Leaders of the seven major industrialised democracies — the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan — said at their London summit this month that the recipe was appointment of a top official to streamline international emergency action.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), whose work is vital in emergency relief, agreed.

"There is a crying need for someone placed above the various U.N. agencies and who can give them orders," says an official of the French organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors

Without Borders).

But U.N. agencies in Geneva said a humanitarian overlord would only slow down relief efforts.

"What we need most and fastest in an emergency situation like this one is money," says a U.N. relief official. "Naming a humanitarian supreme would only add yet another layer to an already heavy bureaucracy."

This official and staff of NGOs say the U.N. system coped well with the first phase of the Gulf crisis, when hundreds of thousands of foreign workers fled Iraq and Kuwait after Iraq invaded the emirate last Aug. 2.

"That's because donor nations provided funds rapidly while Iraq's neighbours let their borders open and contributed their own scarce financial resources," the official said.

But in the Kurdish crisis, after

U.S.-led forces drove Iraq's army from Kuwait at the end of February, the international response was less eager. Less than half the \$449 million of relief funds the U.N. requested in April has materialised, the official said.

The official also argued that under its mandate the U.N. cannot move into a country without prior approval from its government. NGOs operate under no such political constraints.

"Appointing a humanitarian supreme would not speed up relief unless the U.N. mandate is changed," he said.

U.N. bodies involved in relief operations include the World Health Organisation (WHO), the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.N. Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO).

In theory, the humanitarian

overlord's job already exists. UN-DRO was set up 20 years ago to coordinate aid during major disasters. But critics say it lacks authority.

The high commissioner for refugees, Sadako Ogata of Japan, has suggested setting up a pool of cash, supplies and personnel to enable the U.N. system to respond promptly to refugee crisis.

But U.N. sources say she, like the heads of other U.N. relief bodies, opposes the appointment of a humanitarian overlord — a job for which Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, one of her predecessors and the current humanitarian envoy to the Gulf, is often tipped.

"When we can mobilise financial resources fast, half the problem is already solved," says a UNHCR official.

The idea of a humanitarian overlord has received an equally cool response from Third World

nations. Heavyweights such as Brazil and Mexico see it as opening a door to Western interference in their internal affairs.

Privately they express fears that the allied military intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan, which gave way later to a U.N. presence, could be repeated.

"United Nations activities in the humanitarian field do not and should not constitute infringements of national sovereignty," Brazil's permanent U.N. representative, Ronaldo Sardenberg, said during a recent Geneva debate.

Bypassing normal U.N. procedures would be acceptable during a natural disaster but not in emergencies with complex political overtones, he added.

Mexican Ambassador Jorge Montano also opposed the idea, saying: "Sovereignty is not negotiable."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 29 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Another rise in temperature will take place and winds will be north-easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and the sea calm.

Min./max. temp.

Amman 28/32

Aqaba 26/39

Deserts 20/38

Jordan Valley 22/38

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 30, Aqaba 38, Humidity readings:

Amman 29 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

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Royal Decree announces commission on Jerusalem members

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday announcing the names of the new members of Higher Commission on Jerusalem Affairs which was originally created in 1973.

Senate member Akram Zuhair retained the chairmanship and Fayez Jaber will remain the commission's secretary general.

According to Mr. Jaber, whenever a new cabinet is formed a Royal Decree is issued announcing the names of the commission members, some of whom should be ministers.

According to the Royal Decree, the commission members are: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Raef Nijem, Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensoor, Minister of Information and Culture Khaled Karaki, Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Mohammad Mheilan, former Mayor of Jerusalem Rawhi Al Khathib, Vice-President at the University of Jordan Adnan Al Bakht, Latin Bishop in Amman Salim Al Sayegh, and Salim Khalilieh who represents the Greek Orthodox community in the Kingdom.

Ministry, local firm reach agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation Saturday concluded a deal with a local construction firm to carry out the second phase of a project which entails the replacement of 11 kilometres of pipelines in the Jordan Valley region.

The pipeline, to carry irrigation water from the King Talal Dam to the Jordan Valley farmlands, will cost JD2.8 million, according to a statement.

It said that the project, to be financed through a loan from the Arab Development Fund, will be complementary to the first phase which was executed between 1987 when seven kilometres of pipelines were laid.

According to a Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) official, the project was bound to save considerable amounts of water that used to be lost when old pipelines repeatedly burst, causing damage to agricultural units, with some flooded others not receiving water at all.

The statement said that the project would be completed in 18 months.

The contract was signed by JVA Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wisab and the local firm manager.

In another development, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation Saturday announced that it had prepared technical designs and plans to set up Wadi Rajel Dam, 45 kilometres north of Al Azraq, to collect rain water for irrigation in the dry season.

The statement by Dr. Kamel Radaideh, director of the Water Resources Department, said that when completed, the dam would have a storage capacity of 3.5 million cubic metres of water.

The dam will be set up in a semi-desert area where water could be used to supply livestock with drinking water and to plant animal feed, according to Dr. Radaideh.

He said that the ministry had prepared plans to set up a number of desert dams and noted that tenders for these projects would be announced after the ministry has secured financial funds were available for their implementation.

In his government policy statement to Parliament earlier this month, Prime Minister Taher Masri said that lack of water was a major problem that impedes the country's socio-economic development.

He promised a national water strategy for the coming two decades and said that plans and studies would be prepared to build dams along with other measures to make available sufficient water for irrigation purposes.



ESBOUL RECEIVES IRAQI OFFICIAL: Interior Minister Jawdat Al Esboul (second right) Saturday received a message from his Iraqi counterpart. The message was delivered to him by Governor Jasssem Mohammad Al Rukabi (second left) of the Iraqi District of Al Anbar, who is currently visiting Jordan. Mr. Esboul said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the message dealt with ways of promoting the brotherly relations between Jordan and Iraq as well as facilitating the movement of citizens between the two countries.

Mr. Esboul said he had sent a reply message to the Iraqi minister with Mr. Al Rukabi stressing Jordan's willingness to bolster ties with Iraq. The meeting was attended by Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior Salameh Hamad, Maftaq Governor Mahmood Al Sari and Badia forces Commander Sharif Fawwaz Zaben Abdallah. Mr. Al Rukabi also held Wednesday a meeting with Mr. Al Sari to coordinate procedures and efforts on the Jordanian-Iraqi border.

Japanese goodwill ambassador shocked by children's plight in Iraq

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Tetusko Kuroyanagi, Japan's goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), recently arrived in Amman after a five-day tour of Iraq.

Accompanying her were 13 journalists, television crew and photographers.

The purpose of her visit was to assess the situation, particularly of the children of Iraq, and to collect as much evidence as possible in terms of photographs and interviews with the Iraqis so that the Japanese people would get another perspective of the war.

"The Japanese people will be shocked. We have many television programmes (about the war) and news, such as CNN, but we never saw what the situation was really like," Ms. Kuroyanagi said.

Ms. Kuroyanagi, a popular television personality said that three different programmes would be aired. The number of viewers, she added "will be around 50 million."

Another way to inform people will be through printed material. Two widely circulated newspapers will see to that, she said.

One newspaper is read by 15 million people and another one has a circulation of eight million, according to Ms. Kuroyanagi. "Many Japanese people will know about the situation," she said.

As soon as the programmes are released, Ms. Kuroyanagi will begin a fund-raising campaign so that desperately needed milk, food and medicine could be bought for the malnourished children.

"This is my ninth mission of this sort and in the past we were able to raise around \$1 million, she said.

Ms. Kuroyanagi, since her appointment as a goodwill ambassador in 1984, has travelled to Tanzania, Niger, India, Mozambique, Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola and Bangladesh.

"We saw many children suffering in Iraq," she said. "There was a shortage of milk and food. Doctors were screaming: 'give us milk and medicine.' Children have very simple diseases, but doctors cannot cure them because of lack of medicine."

Ms. Kuroyanagi described the dirty houses, with dilapidated leaking sewage lines. Dirt covered the floor, like a still-black pond, she said.

"People would stay on top of their houses and sleep there to protect themselves from the sewage. Most of the houses had no roof and the sun burned to a sticky 50 degrees. People do not know how to take the water out so they just live up on the top. With each day, it only gets worse for them," she said.

"I thought I knew about the situation when I was in Japan. I never thought that after the war people would suffer this much," Ms. Kuroyanagi said.

The delegation visited Iraq, Basra and the Kurdish people on the Iraq-Iran border. The television shows which focus on these areas will consist of a 45 minute daily programme, a talk show and a one-hour special programme to be aired on Aug. 2, according to Ms. Kuroyanagi.

Ms. Kuroyanagi is also a well-known author of thirteen books on children. One of the books, "Totto-Chan, The Little Girl in the Window" sold more than seven million copies in Japan and has been translated into English. It became a best seller in the United States. The book has also been translated into 10 other languages, including Arabic.

Before the delegation headed for Iraq, during the stop-over in Amman, the group visited Al-Jizah Community Development Centre and Tablich camp for Palestinian Refugees south of Amman.

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Premier briefs Senate on efforts for peace conference

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament will meet Sunday in a special session to be briefed by Prime Minister Taher Masri on the latest developments regarding U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's peace initiative.

The House will have another session on Wednesday to discuss matters on the agenda, according to a statement by House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat.

Mr. Masri Saturday presented a full briefing to the Senate about the latest developments in the Arab and international arenas and on efforts to give momentum to a peace conference.

The Senate discussed all issues and ideas presented by the prime minister in light of Jordan's principles stand with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and Jordan's role in helping to bring about a just peace and a solution to the Palestine problem.

Discussion covered the impact of these developments on the national security and the domestic front and national unity as well as Jordan's policies to enhance the national and pan-Arab march.

Discussion centred mainly on Jordan's demand for the implementation of the international legitimacy and the achievement of peace in a manner that would ensure the national rights of the Palestinian people and end the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, including Jerusalem.

The Senate and the government were in agreement on continued coordination with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and other Arab parties, regardless of the international pressures and the constraints resulting from the Gulf crisis.

Senate members stressed the gravity of the situation at this stage and called for continued consultation between the government and Parliament.

Before the briefing, the Senate discussed a number of amendments to laws as referred to the House by the Lower House. The Senate rejected a temporary law on Royal Jordanian (RJ) as referred to by the Lower House by a majority of 24 votes.

The rejection was due to the occurrence of the term "regular" coupled with the phrase "air transport operations."

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Ali Subeimat said that such term does not prevent the national airline for carrying out its required duties and earn revenues.

The minister reminded the House that the RJ was to be transformed into a public shareholding company and that any investors would like to be assured of the privileges and rights given to the RJ before embarking on this enterprise.

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AMMAN (J.T.) — The German government is financing a 10-day seminar, by the Ministry of Education, for trainers of school principals to help implement resolutions passed by the national educational conference's resolutions.

A total of 100 principals of government schools, taking part in the seminar, will do theoretical and practical work pertaining to directing principals in their work. They will also watch documentaries of case studies and take part in workshops on communicating with teachers and principals.

The implementation of the 1987 national educational conference entails a complete revision and development of teaching methods, textbooks and any other aspects related to the educational process, especially the choice of appropriate and qualified school principals, Minister of Education Eid Dahiyat said in an address at the opening session.

"The Ministry of Education wants the principals to move away from the traditional methods and direct their attention to the genuine educational roles," Dr. Dahiyat said. "The role of a school principal is no longer restricted to keeping discipline and order in his school and monitoring the attendance of students, but rather to focusing on the students' potential in a bid to build integrated and balanced characters that could confront the needs of life ahead," the minister added.

The Ministry of Education's assistant secretary general, Dr. Khaled Al Ghazzawi, told the opening session that Jordan now has 2,500 school principals, of whom 38 per cent hold the first university degree. Of these, 45 per cent are employed in the secondary stage, Dr. Ghazzawi said.

To implement the 1987 educational conference resolutions, Dr. Ghazzawi added that the Ministry of Education had enlisted the assistance of 200 local experts, mainly university educators.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will help the Jordanian government conduct studies on finding solutions to the consequences of the Gulf crisis on Jordan, including a way to deal with the expatriates' problems.

According to an agreement signed by the Ministry of Planning and the UNDP, Jordan will get JD 174,000 from the U.N. to help finance the study. The Jordanian government will contribute JD 100,000 worth of materials and services to the projects.

According to a Ministry of Planning official, the project aims at helping the government collect and analyse data about Jordanians returning from the Gulf region prior to working out short and long-term programmes to deal with the expatriates' needs and problems.

Earlier this month the government announced its decision to begin spending from a JD 120 million supplementary emergency budget for 1991, approved by Parliament last December, mainly to help absorb returnees from Kuwait and Gulf states.

Minister of Finance Basel Jaradneh said that he had issued instructions to the concerned authorities to begin spending the allocated sums for expatriate projects.

The government said that tens of thousands of expatriates have been forced to return from Kuwait. It added that it would carry out programmes like infrastructure projects to boost health facilities, improve water and power supplies, transport services and boost schools' capacity in order to absorb the expatriates.

Upon presenting his government's statement to Parliament earlier this month, Prime Minister Taher Masri said that absorbing the returning expatriates would be one of the government's main concerns.

Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz and UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan Ali Atiga signed the documents for the project at the Ministry of Planning.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is preparing an integrated plan to develop waqf land owned by the Ministry of Awqaf and used for charity that has been frozen for many years in cooperation with the private sector, according to an announcement by Minister of Awqaf Raef Nijem.

The ministry plans to lease units of this land to private sector's developers for a period of 30 years at the end of which the lands and the buildings on them would be returned to the ministry, the minister said.

So far, the ministry has conducted a survey covering all waqf land owned by the ministry and its different departments around the Kingdom in order to classify them for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. The survey, he said, is needed before the investment plan can be approved by the ministry's awqaf council.

Referring to the ministry's other plans and programmes, Mr. Nijem said that the ministry had embarked on measures to build an Islamic college to turn out mosque preachers and imams. Work on the project will start in the coming year and the initial estimate of the project is put at JD 1.5 million, the minister pointed out.

He said that the Islamic Dawas Society of Libya had contributed \$400,000 to this project.

"The tombs of Prophet Mohammad's companions in the Jordan Valley will receive appropriate attention by the Ministry of Awqaf and at least JD 500,000 will be spent on Obaida's tomb in the coming year," the minister said.

"Due attention is being given to the companions' tombs, found in Jordan, in implementation of directives by His Majesty King Hussein in 1984," said the minister.

Designs for developing these tombs have been drawn up and amendments would be added before work can start, the minister noted.

The Ministry of Awqaf, he said, has plans to repair and restore old mosques, especially those with historical background.

The minister said that Jordan would take part in a conference by the World Higher Islamic Council for Dawa and Relief, due to open in Cairo next month, and would brief the conference on the condition of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

The Jordanian delegation at the meeting, he said, will also seek to establish a special fund designed to help safeguard the Islamic places in Jerusalem and help boost the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli occupation.

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AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs is preparing an integrated plan to develop waqf land owned by the Ministry of Awqaf and used for charity that has been frozen for many years in cooperation with the private sector, according to an announcement by Minister of Awqaf Raef Nijem.

The ministry plans to lease units of this land to private sector's developers for a period of 30 years at the end of which the lands and the buildings on them would be returned to the ministry, the minister said.

So far, the ministry has conducted a survey covering all waqf land owned by the ministry and its different departments around the Kingdom in order to classify them for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. The survey, he said, is needed before the investment plan can be approved by the ministry's awqaf council.

Referring to the ministry's other plans and programmes, Mr. Nijem said that the ministry had embarked on measures to build an Islamic college to turn out mosque preachers and imams. Work on the project will start in the coming year and the initial estimate of the project is put at JD 1.5 million, the minister pointed out.

He said that the Islamic Dawas Society of Libya had contributed \$400,000 to this project.

"The tombs of Prophet Mohammad's companions in the Jordan Valley will receive appropriate attention by the Ministry of Awqaf and at least JD 500,000 will be spent on Obaida's tomb in the coming year," the minister said.

"Due attention is being given to the companions' tombs, found in Jordan, in implementation of directives by His Majesty King Hussein in 1984," said the minister.

Designs for developing these tombs have been drawn up and amendments would be added before work can start, the minister noted.

The Ministry of Awqaf, he said, has plans to repair and restore old mosques, especially those with historical background.

The minister said that Jordan would take part in a conference by the World Higher Islamic Council for Dawa and Relief, due to open in Cairo next month, and would brief the conference on the condition of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

The Jordanian delegation at the meeting, he said, will also seek to establish a special fund designed to help safeguard the Islamic places in Jerusalem and help boost the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli occupation.



Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz (second right) and left) Saturday sign an agreement for expatriate projects at the Ministry of Planning (Petra photo) Resident Representative in Jordan Ali Atiga (third

U.N. agency to help Jordan deal with expatriate problem

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will help the Jordanian government conduct studies on finding solutions to the consequences of the Gulf crisis on Jordan, including a way to deal with the expatriates' problems.

According to an agreement signed by the Ministry of Planning and the UNDP, Jordan will get JD 174,000 from the U.N. to help finance the study. The Jordanian government will contribute JD 100

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Is it too much?

THERE IS an emergency out there among the thousands of Jordanians who have returned from Kuwait. Granted, a few of the returnees are very well to do, but the vast majority of them are penniless and their living conditions are steadily deteriorating.

Scenes resembling family picnics turn out to be expatriate families who have set up homes in isolated spots because they could not afford the rent on an apartment. Their only worldly possession is perhaps the vehicle they brought in from Kuwait. Many live in their vehicles and having to pay the fees for what is literally their "mobile home" is another burden on them.

Real-life stories are plenty: An 11-member family feeding itself with less than 40 dinars a month; someone who went to hospital but had to give up urgently needed treatment for lack of money; parents being asked by their children why they are not being sent to school even when it only costs less than five dinars a month.

Relief workers estimate that about 35 per cent of all returnees carried home nothing more than the clothes they wore. Most of them had no savings since their monthly earnings went to supporting families in Jordan and in the occupied territories.

True, they had a comfortable life in Kuwait but the memory of that life is about all they have brought home.

The conditions facing the hundreds of thousands of our brethren could perhaps not be seen detached from the overall situation in the country, given the fact that surveys have found that over one million Jordanians live under the poverty line. The government is doing what it can, perhaps not where it is highly visible. For instance, funds have been channelled to the education and health services systems to cope with mounting demand and easy-term loans are being granted for enterprising self-employment projects. Of course, one expects the government to do much more but then one also has to remember the limited resources Jordan has at its disposal.

What appears to be overlooked in the bargain is the fact that the upper class of the society also have a responsibility to shoulder some of the burden caused by their less-fortunate kinsmen.

It may not be any different from a typical Third World country, but the overall situation in the country warrants a very close look by the society at large with a view to determining what those affluent Jordanians can do to help alleviate the suffering of the thousands of expatriates.

Is it too much to remind a businessman who spends 100 dinars on a lunch for four that five per cent of that sum could feed an entire family of eight for a day?

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i Saturday focused attention on the on-going efforts to find a solution to the Middle East conflict in the light of the coming visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker later in the coming week. It seems that the Americans and the Israelis are in full agreement on the steps to be taken and so they have coordinated their stands. Against all this, one cannot see any concerted action on the part of the Arab parties to the conflict despite the fast moving developments and the fact that the Israelis and the Americans are in concert about their stand, noted the paper. It should be emphasised that Israel has interest in dealing with each Arab party on its own and not facing the Arabs altogether, and for this reason Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir stated Friday that he was keen on starting the negotiations with the Arabs as soon as possible, the paper said. Jordan, for its part, has made it clear that it would not represent the Palestinians but that its position should not prevent the Kingdom from coordinating its stands with the other parties, the paper said. As Jordan reiterates its clear position and stresses that the Kingdom will never go it alone, said the paper, there must be a quick move on the part of all the Arab parties to coordinate their stand and embark on the negotiations in a manner that would safeguard all Arab interests.

President George Bush's written pledge to Syrian President Hafez Assad that Israel would withdraw its forces from all the occupied Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian lands reminds the Arabs of a similar written pledge given to King Hussein by former President Lyndon Johnson that Israel would pull out from Arab lands and implement U.N. Security Council resolution 242 in a matter of six months, said a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. We know for sure that the Americans are lying to us and that their guarantees lead nowhere and we know that former President Gerald Ford had given Israel the green light to annex the Golan Heights as was evident in Mr. Ford's letter to the Israeli government revealed in the Israeli press some days ago, columnist Tarek Masarweh noted. He said that the Arabs also realise that those American presidents who appear to be more and more inclined to achieve peace, are in secret pumping more and more arms and cash into the Jewish state, the writer continued. All American pledges are false promises to the Arabs and are only a cover for the U.S. administration to offer more aid to the Jewish state, the writer said. These empty promises, he said, are also a sort of cover for the Americans to launch another aggression on the Iraqi people and deal at will with the Arab oil wealth, the writer added. Only those fools among the Arabs whose hands are stained with the blood of their countrymen and those who sold out their nation a long time ago, would like to believe the U.S. promises, the writer concluded.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Israeli settlements for Arab boycott?

INSPIRED by the United States, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has proposed that the Arabs and Israel should make concessions in order to build good-will and enhance the chances of success for the forthcoming peace conference. The transaction aired by Mr. Mubarak is that Israel should suspend settlement in the occupied Arab territories, while the Arabs lift economic boycott against Israel.

It is obvious why Israel is not interested in any form of peace conference, much less its success. On the other hand, the Arabs were calling for an international conference for the last 18 years, since the Geneva conference convened for only one session and disbursed without any results.

During those 18 years Israel conveniently exploited Arab objections and reservations to prevent a conference that would have led to an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Clearly, Israel is not willing to return the occupied Arab land in exchange of any Arab concessions.

Israel, or at least the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir, does not want peace because war is its only way for further expansion, and because its own peace is guaranteed by America, its strategic ally, through unlimited financial, military and political support. The status quo is thus quite desirable for Israel, at least in the short run and as long as the Arabs have no military option

and after the Arabs lost most of the cards which could be used against Israel, especially after the destruction of Iraq's power and the liquidation of the military presence of the PLO in Lebanon and elsewhere.

Obviously the present state of affairs is not favorable for negotiations from an Arab point of view. In the absence of Iraq and the PLO, the Arabs have very little, if any, bargaining power. The real parties in the coming peace conference will, therefore, be Israel and the United States. The outcome of the conference would in effect be what concessions the United States is willing to extract from Israel in favour of the Arabs against any price that Israel may charge.

The exchange of Arab boycott for Israeli settlement, despite its American-Egyptian origin, should not be rejected out of hand and without real calculation of the costs and benefits. Israel has already rejected the formula because it grew accustomed to free concessions from the Arab side. Israel would, of course, like Arabs to reject the offer because that would facilitate its position. It prefers to use the same American approach during the Gulf crisis, when it forced Iraq to make the very decisions that America wanted.

The Jordanian press voiced some objections to the exchange of concessions. Writers argued that it is not fair nor just to give up

the boycott, a legitimate act of Arab states sovereignty, for the halt of settlement in the occupied territories which is illegal in the eyes of international law. But this argument brings us back to square one. We have spent time and effort to prove the Arabs right and the Israelis wrong. But we are not in a court of justice which may uphold right because it is right and put down wrong because it is wrong, irrespective of the balance of power prevailing between the two parties. It is true that the Arab boycott is right; but so are the withdrawal from the occupied territories, the independent Palestinian state and last but not least the principle of self-determination. These rights are empty as long as Arabs are unable to enforce them because of American policy in the Middle East.

Suspending settlement building has a vital political value. It means that the West Bank will not be Judaized and will eventually be recovered, while boycott is an ineffective economic process as long as the Israeli economy and treasury are heavily subsidised by American taxpayers.

Suspension of settlement building in the West Bank has more value to the Arabs than boycott. The evidence is that Israel will reject the formula based on calculation, and, I am afraid, the Arabs may also reject it, but out of ignorance and lack of calculation.

The week in print:

Arab League assumes role

MOST of the Arabic daily papers discussed the mission of the Arab League secretary-general in the light of his visit to Jordan Wednesday and Thursday and focused attention on a visit to Jordan and the Middle East area by the U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in addition to discussing a host of domestic issues of concern to the public.

Dwelling on the Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid's visit, Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the Arab League chief is to be commended for his attempts and efforts to breathe life again into the Arab League and stimulate collective Arab action and heal rifts in Arab ranks. But the paper said Mr. Abdul Meguid's task would have been more comprehensive and his mission more realistic should he have decided to add Iraq to his itinerary, because that gesture would project him as truly intent on re-establishing solidarity among Arab countries at this crucial moment of their history.

Al Dustour daily supported this view and said that all Arab states are now looking to Mr. Abdul Meguid to help the Arab League stand up again and deal with the challenges that face all the Arabs. The paper said, Mr. Abdul Meguid's mission was not a bed of rose, especially as it comes in wake of the Gulf war which devastated solidarity among Arabs and revealed many defects in the Arab order.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily criticised Mr. Abdul Meguid for his failure to act as a secretary general of the Arab League, several months after being appointed to the post. Fahd Al Fanek said that the new Arab League chief still

behaves as Egypt's foreign minister, and his current tour of Arab countries does not include Baghdad, considered by Cairo as an enemy to the Arabs. So far Mr. Abdul Meguid did not demand that foreign forces be withdrawn from Iraq and a halt to Western interference in Iraq's internal affairs and he did not even demand a lifting of the economic embargo on the Iraqi people, Mr. Fanek noted.

Reflecting on the Middle East in the light of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's fifth tour, Sawt Al Shaab daily said that now that the Arabs have accepted the Baker plan for the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, one can say that the ball was squarely placed in the Israeli court before Yitzhak Shamir threw it onto the American side. The paper noted that the Israeli government's refusal of the plan, its continued efforts to build settlements on the occupied territories in defiance of the U.S. administration and the world community can only prove the Jewish state's arrogance which has come about as a result of Washington's continued support of Israel and refrain from exercising any pressures on its government to change its adamant stand.

When the Arabs accepted the Baker plan, they ought to have demanded the U.S. administration committed itself to force Israel to accept the international legitimacy, the paper said.

A columnist in Al Dustour bitterly criticised the peace plan presented by Mr. Baker and said that the plan clearly overlooks the right of those Palestinians evicted from their land occupied in 1948, ignores

the role of the United Nations and neutralises the status of Jerusalem. Hamadeh Faraneeb said that the Arabs should say a big no to such plan because it does not ensure the rights of the Arabs and ignores the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination and independence.

Another columnist in Al Dustour attacked the Baker plan and said that it was intended only to give the Israelis more time to gain and to consolidate their hold on Arab land. Mohammad Kawash said that Mr. Baker and Mr. Shamir are cooking a formula to be served to the Arabs, but Mr. Baker is to serve it little by little and each time he finds a way to detract the Arab countries' minds from the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Bader Abdul Haq, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, tackled the question of ending the economic boycott imposed on Israel by the Arab states for its occupation of Palestinian land. By ending the boycott the Arabs are offering a free gift to the Israelis, the writer noted. He said that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who suggested the end of the boycott, was offering a gift to Mr. Shamir with the hope that it would be conducive to the cause of peace, but it would be like total capitulation to the Israeli will. The Israelis, he said, would not be persuaded to accept the idea of halting the building of settlements in exchange for ending the boycott, simply because Israeli goods continue to reach the Arab countries through a third party.

Writing in Al Dustour daily, Mohammad Daoud focused attention on the new gov-

ernment of Prime Minister Taher Masri and said that nobody can expect miracles from this government overnight, but it is hoped that it will be open-minded and accept proposals and criticisms.

It is important for the government and Parliament to maintain close cooperation if the country is to achieve a headway for solving domestic issues and confronting the enormous challenges, the writer noted. He said the government can achieve a great deal if it properly utilised the expertise at its disposal and the skilled human resources found in the Kingdom. To stimulate Jordan's economic and political role in the Arab World and boost national exports, the country requires all sincere efforts at all fronts, he said.

A columnist in Al Ra'i said that Jordan now has a progressive and democratic government but is faced with a solid opposition represented in Parliament with its various blocs. The media is regarded as a watchdog over the government's behaviour and will be quick to criticise negative attitudes, thus forming another opposition front for the government, Fahd Al Fanek noted. What is encouraging in the atmosphere of democracy, is the fact that the government is no more a tool for oppression, but rather a means for enhancing democracy and expanding the base of public freedoms.

Those who gave the government their confidence and those who refrained from doing so will be watching to see if the government would stick to its policy statement with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and Jordan's principled stands, said Salameh Ekmor in Sawt Al Shaab daily.

Banker of choice to the CIA

By Larry Collins

SAINT-TROPEZ, France — Bankers are like doctors. They love to gossip among themselves about a colleague's shortcomings, but let an outsider try to listen to their conversation and they freeze.

The Bank of Credit & Commerce International is in the throes of financial collapse. Despite the pious noises coming out of London and Washington, the fact is that its slipshod management and its penchant for money laundering and tiptoeing along the frontier of legality have been the gossip of the banking community for at least a decade.

There is, however, another still largely undisclosed and potentially more sordid aspect of BCCI's history — its services as banker of choice to the CIA.

What will particularly outrage many Americans is that the CIA was dealing extensively with the bank at the same time that other U.S. government agencies — the Customs Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration — were pursuing the bank for its role as the world's premier money laundering institution.

It is now widely known that Manuel Antonio Noriega used BCCI branches in Panama, London, Luxembourg and the Cayman Islands to process what the U.S. Department of Justice alleges were illegal drug profits.

The CIA-BCCI ties seem to fit a pattern of agency activities during the tenure of William Casey.

I have in my possession dozens of BCCI documents dealing with then General Noriega's accounts at the bank's Edgeware and Cromwell Road branches in London. They reveal that from 1986 to 1988 money poured through those branches enroute from Panama to Luxembourg and then God knows where.

Why did General Noriega use the services of the BCCI? Because his employers at the CIA told him to.

The agency had been using the bank's Panamanian branch to make discreet payments in Central and Latin America since the branch opened in 1980. In 1982, shortly after General Noriega had agreed to give clandestine support to the contra programme Duane Clarridge, manager of the CIA's Central American task force, instructed him to set up bank accounts that could be used for their joint activities and referred him to the BCCI Panamanian manager, Anja Awan.

General Noriega opened a secret account at the bank in his own name with instructions "that it will be operated solely by me with written or verbal instructions given to you personally."

Initially, he used the accounts to deposit CIA and other U.S. government funds being relayed to him for the improvement of the intelligence-gathering capacities of his branch of the Panamanian Defence Forces. Subsequently, he employed it to receive money from CIA cover corporations to pay for the purchase of arms for the contras that he or his associates had made on their behalf.

Finding the bank's services much to his liking, he made BCCI his prime personal bank, using it to pay for hotels, limousines and aircraft rentals on his trips abroad. He mixed into the same accounts in which he deposited CIA money sums that the Department of Justice now alleges came from narcotics traffic.

José Blandón, a former Noriega associate and a key wit-

ness both for the Senate subcommittee which investigated General Noriega's activities in 1988 and for the U.S. Attorney's office in Miami that indicted him, studied many of the general's BCCI records at the government's request.

"You see money flowing through those accounts from the CIA to Noriega to the contras," he says. "You also see drug money flowing through those same accounts." Many of those records were so embarrassing, according to Mr. Blandón, that the CIA seized them to prevent them from surfacing in a Miami courtroom during the general's trial.

John Blum, legal counsel to Massachusetts Senator John Kerry when the senator was investigating the BCCI's activities for the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations, maintains that the Bush administration has resisted a full investigation of the bank's laundering of drug money in order to prevent the disclosure of the CIA's relationship with the bank.

That accusation stems from the 1989 arrest of a group of BCCI officers for money laundering in Tampa, Florida. Instead of going after the bank itself, the Department of Justice allowed BCCI to enter a plea of nolo contendere in the case. In return, the U.S. Attorney's office agreed to drop all charges against the bank in connection with any wrongdoing by BCCI known to the U.S. government.

For Mr. Blum and his enraged fellow committee staffers, that plea bargain was a flagrant disavowal of "basic sound prosecutorial strategy." It was accepted by the Department of Justice, they are convinced, to keep any hint of the CIA's dealings with the bank from appearing in a courtroom.

It is Mr. Blum's conviction that the CIA funded via BCCI "a whole range of off-the-book covert operations set in motion all over the world to destabilise the Soviet Union" — activities such as funding Solidarity and Afghan guerrillas. He believes those activities also included heretofore secret arms purchases for dissident Soviet ethnic groups ranging from Armenians to Azerbaijanis and Turcomans — in short, any ethnic group with a grievance and a readiness to act on it. It constituted, he is convinced, "a flat-out Casey-driven effort to dismember the U.S.S.R."

For the CIA, a large Third World banking institution, staffed at the top by reliable friends, able to deliver money anywhere in the world without leaving any trace as to where it came from or how it got there, was a vital adjunct to covert operations. The CIA's initial employment of the bank was not illegal or even, in the circumstances perhaps, unwise. Where the agency's wisdom can be questioned is in its continuing use of a bank that U.S. law enforcement knew was up to its neck in money laundering.

In its defence, agency officials will murmur that "in this business you don't deal with altar boys," and point out that the very fact that BCCI handled drug money helped cover the agency's activities with it.

That may be so. Nonetheless, the CIA-BCCI ties seem to fit a pattern of agency activities during the tenure of William Casey — Iran-contra — only the best known example — the wisdom and legality of which were dubious at best. — The International Herald Tribune

Iraq 'faces widespread starvation'

Sanctions against Iraq must be eased if the country is to obtain the oil revenue needed to repair its shattered social and economic life, says a UN fact-finding team. The following excerpts are taken from the report to the UN Secretary-General on "humanitarian needs in Iraq," drawn up by a UN mission led by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. The authors, who recently returned from Iraq, stress that their findings are based "on observations and conclusions drawn from on-the-spot evaluation."

THE mission members concluded that the scale of damage and decline in Iraq in the past year had been dramatic. The impact of sanctions had been, and remains, very substantial on the economy and living conditions of its civilian population. The mission was informed that the last reserves of food commodities that are included in the ration basket are in the process of being exhausted. During the past several months, major efforts have been made by the government of Iraq to restore the country to some semblance of its pre-war situation. These have only been partially successful.

Damage to water treatment plants, and the inability to obtain needed spare parts, have cut off an estimated 2½ million Iraqis from the government system they relied upon before the war. The 14.5 million Iraqis who continue to receive their water through this system are now provided with a quarter of the pre-war amount per day. Much of this water is of doubtful quality. Major damage was also suffered by the national sewage system. Most of this damage has not been repaired, with raw sewage flowing in some city streets and into rivers. Diarrhoeal diseases are at four times the level of a

year ago. The country is experiencing outbreaks of typhoid and cholera.

Hospitals and public health centres are severely affected by lack of electricity, water, and medicines. Medical, surgical, dental and laboratory equipment suffer from lack of spare parts and maintenance.

As for the food supply, the position is deteriorating rapidly in virtually all parts of the country. Preliminary forecasts for the current main harvest indicate that this year's aggregate cereal production will be around one-third of last year's.

Current retail prices for wheat and rice — the two normal staple food items — remain 45 and 22 times their price levels of last year, while incomes have shown only moderate gains. The government rationing system can only provide about one-third of the typical family's food needs.

Several independent studies, and direct observation by the mission, confirmed the high prevalence of malnutrition among children.

This clearly demonstrates a widespread and acute food supply crisis which, if not averted through timely intervention, will inexorably cause massive starva-

tion throughout the country.

Electricity production is about 40 per cent of the 1990 level; as for telecommunications, at least 400,000 of the original 900,000 telephones lines were damaged beyond repair. All international telecommunications were put out of service.

The primary action that is needed to address these needs is the import of material goods.

This includes drugs, vaccines, medical equipment, ambulances, spare parts and replacements for water and sewage equipment, food and agricultural inputs, equipment and parts for power plants and the oil sector, as well as for the telecommunications network.

The following amounts of money will be needed to restore services: \$12 billion for the power generating capacity, \$6 billion for the oil sector, \$450 million for the water and sanitation systems, \$2.64 billion for food imports and \$500 million for agricultural inputs.

While these calculations were not possible for health, an indicative figure would be the typical level of international imports for the health sector for one year, which has been approximately \$500 million.

It certainly appeared that the Iraqi government has the potential itself to generate the funds required to cover the needs identified by the team. This could be done either by unfreezing substantial amounts of Iraqi assets held abroad, or through the sale of oil.

According to the government, the current oil production capacity of the country is 1,455 million barrels per day. Taking into account internal consumption, the production available for export could be about one million barrels per day. This would mean a net revenue of \$5.5 billion over one year.

The mission therefore recommends:

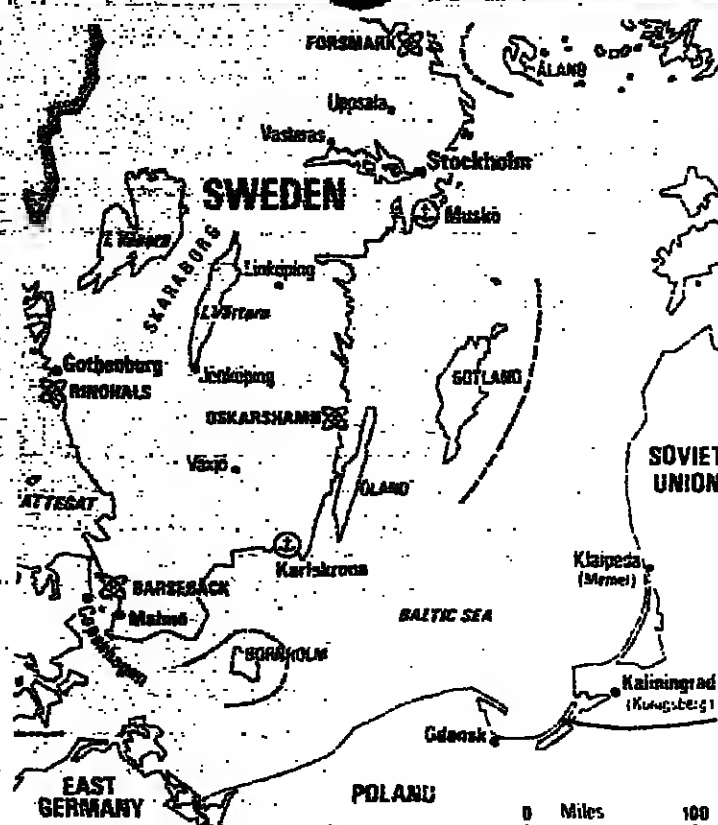
• That Iraq be allowed to import over a four-month period \$1 billion of equipment, spare parts and materials to start restoration of the oil sector.

• That immediate steps be taken to alleviate the priority needs identified by the mission in the areas of food supply, health services, water and sanitation, power generation, the oil sector and telecommunications.

• Food imports should be allowed to meet the minimum consumption requirement.

• Imports of fertilisers, pesticides, animal feed and drugs, machinery and spare parts needed to repair the damaged irrigation and drainage system should also be allowed.

• Other imports should also be permitted, including drugs, vaccines, and surgical, dental and diagnostic equipment; vehicles and spare parts needed by the health system, including ambulances; spare parts and equipment needed by water treatment and pumping facilities and by the sewage system; and equipment, materials and spare parts for the electric power system, the oil sector and the telecommunications sector.



New 'fun' party rocks Swedish political life

By Lars Foyen
Reuters

STOCKHOLM — An eccentric aristocrat and a pop music publisher have shaken Sweden's staid political establishment with a populist movement that aims to make life "simpler, cheaper and more fun."

Founded only six months ago, the New Democracy Party is already polling about 10 per cent in opinion surveys as Sweden heads for general elections on Sept. 15.

"We are witnessing a typical Swedish revolution. It is a polite process, but the message is clear: the people want a new system," party leader and businessman Count Jan Wachtmeister said in an interview.

New Democracy wants to make life simpler by, for instance, abolishing traffic wardens, more fun by easing the tough alcohol laws and cheaper by lowering taxes and privatising much of the social welfare system, one of the most extensive in the world.

It also wants Sweden to establish military ties with the West instead of being neutral, and to tighten up immigration policies.

Swedish politicians have reacted with horror at Count Wachtmeister and his party's co-founder Bert Karlsson.

Name-calling is rife. The media have dubbed the pair "the mad count and the butler."

Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson, a Social Democrat, has described them as "rightist loonies."

Foreign Minister Sten Andersson recently called them "Frankenstein's monster," to which Count Wachtmeister responded: "Andersson must have seen Bert early one morning."

Count Wachtmeister, 58, is a practical joker. He once dressed as an air hostess to serve drinks at a birthday party aboard an airplane.

Karlsson, 46, founded his own record company and epitomises the self-made millionaire. For years he has stirred controversy with his provocative views aired on television chat shows.

Sweden's hidebound political scene has had no place for popul-

ists until now.

The Social Democrats have been in power for more than half a century, usually with the support of the small Communist Party. The Conservative Moderate Party, the Liberal Party and the Agrarian Centre Party have provided the opposition.

But a dramatic drop in opinion poll support for the Social Democrats — down to about 30 per cent from 43 per cent at the 1988 elections — and a surge to some 10 per cent for the Christian Democrats are seen as signs that voters are tired of the old order.

Count Wachtmeister sees his early success partly as a protest against a dull and out-of-touch political establishment which "debates marginal policy differences in a language nobody understands."

Political scientists also cite disenchantment with Sweden's cradle-to-grave welfare state and some of the highest taxation levels in the world.

"It's a vote against bureaucracy and for individual freedom," said Count Wachtmeister, who thinks the popular uprising against Communism in Eastern Europe inspired Swedes to support his low-key revolt.

The central Stockholm office which doubles as headquarters for the New Democracy Party and Count Wachtmeister's company group, the empire AB, reflects the eccentric style of the count — a tall, slim, balding man who likes very loud ties.

Count Wachtmeister, a former director in the blue-chip Electrolux household appliance group and author of two critical books on Swedish politics, talks plainly on complex issues.

"It wouldn't be a massacre of the people's welfare, only of the bureaucrats," he said of the party's proposal to cut taxes to 46 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) from the current 56 per cent over a six-year period.

"Traffic wardens do nothing but harass people. Let's bring back the old-fashioned neighbourhood cop and let him enforce parking laws when absolutely necessary. As a bonus ordinary people could walk the streets safely again," Count Wachtmeister said.

A tide of change on the Nile?

On the eve of his visit to London, July 23 Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak talked to Godfrey Hodgson from the Independent.

Only three of the 33 stations on Cairo's new Metro are named after modern Egyptians. There is Nasser station, called after Gamal Abdul Nasser, who carried out the revolution that brought Egypt to independence and tried to purify his country at the head of Arab nationalism. There is Sadat station, commemorating Anwar Sadat, the son of peasants who made peace with Israel and rebuilt Egypt's links with the West, and who was assassinated by Islamic extremists. And there is Mubarak, honouring Hosni Mubarak, former member of Nasser's Free Officers Movement, who today comes to London as the Queen's guest and John Major's visitor.

Yet after 10 years of his presidency, Mr. Mubarak's face is not as ubiquitous as those of his predecessors, whose features, vastly magnified, stared from every public building and street corner. Like François Mitterrand Mr. Mubarak is carrying out a massive public works programme. But it does not celebrate a cult of personality, like Saddam Hussein's megalomaniac monuments in Baghdad. It marks the revival of confidence in a country which, in spite of severe economic difficulties and long experience of a corrupt and incompetent bureaucracy, is beginning to believe that the future for ordinary Egyptians will be more tolerable than the past.

President Mubarak's boldest decision so far was to cast Egypt's weight without equivocation on the side of George Bush's grand coalition against Iraq. The cost was not negligible. Egypt sent 38,000 servicemen to the Gulf and Egyptian officials calculate that the total financial cost of the war, including lost exports and lost remittances from Egyptians who fled from Iraq and Kuwait, is about \$20bn (£12bn).

Asked to draw up a balance sheet of the war, President Mubarak almost shrugged off the financial cost. "We are very good friends of the Saudis and the Kuwaitis," he said. "During the war, we didn't ask them for financial help, but — frankly speaking — they helped us, and whenever we need more we will ask them."

I pressed him about the present

duplicitous and traps, "whenever the peace process starts, any suspicions will be on the table. Nobody will hide anything, and if they did it would be uncovered immediately. So let us go through the negotiations. This is the best guarantee for the security of the region."

Whatever the financial cost, the political balance sheet of the Gulf crisis for Egypt has turned out — as President Mubarak himself put it — very much on the credit side.

The position of Egypt has been strengthened internationally. In fact, though Mr. Mubarak did not use that phrase, Egypt is now in the process of recovering some of the status as a regional superpower that it lost as a result of Anwar Sadat's decision to break ranks with the rest of the Arab World and seek peace between Egypt and Israel at Camp David.

Egypt, one of President Mubarak's advisers put it to me, has reinforced its Arab role by restoring its position as a key country in the Middle East and in helping to solve the regional crisis.

There have been ancillary advantages. The Egyptian military, roughly halved by Israel in 1967 and 1973, have regained confidence and prestige. Egypt's support of the UN during the crisis, Egyptian officials point out, will make it easier to use international force to deal with aggression, rather than leaving the weaker states in the region to fend for themselves.

That is all somewhat beside the main point however. The nub of the matter is that Mr. Mubarak, like Mr. Sadat but unlike Mr. Nasser, has decided to throw in his lot not with the radical Arab nations, or with the angry young men in the Arab street, but with the West. He is now a fierce opponent both of Islamic fundamentalism and of the shrill, anti-Western Arab nationalism of the Nasser era.

He is determined not to allow militant fundamentalism, of the kind that is on the march in the Sudan and in the Meghreb, to invade Egypt, though he points out wryly that the Middle East is not the only area of the world to be afflicted by fundamentalism of

one kind or another.

Most important of all, he is convinced that Egypt's own social and economic problems can be cured only with the help and sympathy, not to mention the investment, the trade and the tourism, of the West. In the first place, that means the U.S. But an important part of the point of President Mubarak's visit to London is that he means to forge the temporary alliance against Saddam Hussein into a new, more trusting and more co-operative relationship with the other members of the coalition.

Perhaps the most surprising consequence of the Gulf crisis, for Egypt at least, is that such a strategy is now far more realistic than it seemed a year ago. When Mr. Sadat broke with the Arab World and recognised Israel, it was a quixotic and dangerous gesture. For Mr. Mubarak, the calculation of advantage is less agonising, the danger demonstrably less.

He pointed out that for Mr. Sadat as well as himself, peace between Egypt and Israel was always only the first phase of the process that would be needed to bring peace to the Middle East as a whole. He sees the Gulf war as his opportunity to pick up his predecessor's initiative and move forward.



Hosni Mubarak: Palestinians will never give up their land

Training Opportunities In The USA For Business, Manufacturing, Service Personnel And Others In Private Sector Enterprises

The Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), invites women and men who are Jordanian citizens competent in written and spoken English to apply for short term training that will be useful to private sector businesses.

Training in practical business skills will be provided for up to 6 months at training institutes, universities and businesses in such fields as marketing, management, banking, accounting, computers, production methods, quality control, and more. As an example of the kind of training that is available is the Small Business Management Programme offered by the International Institute for Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Graduate School. The programme was developed for individuals working in private enterprises and includes courses in business planning and management, accounting and information systems, entrepreneurship training and productivity.

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ports

Mansell takes pole in Germany

HOCKENHEIM, Germany (R) — Briton Nigel Mansell stayed on course for a Formula One hat-trick Saturday by taking pole position for Sunday's German Grand Prix.

Mansell, driving a Williams, clocked a best time of one minute and 37.087 seconds in a tense final qualifying session to claim the prime grid position for the 45-lap race on the dangerous high-speed Hockenheimring.

Mansell finished two-tenths of a second clear of Brazilian world champion Ayrton Senna who improved his time by a second from Friday's opening session in his McLaren.

Austrian Gerhard Berger was third-fastest in the second McLaren and will share the second row of the grid for the race with Mansell's Williams team-mate Riccardo Patrese.

All four drivers from the two leading teams were separated by only four-tenths of a second.

The pole is the 19th of Mansell's career, but the 37-year-old Englishman was angry afterwards because on his second flying lap, when he thought he would improve his time even more, he was badly baulked by Frenchman Erik Comas at the third chicane.

After confronting him in the Ligier Pits, Mansell said Comas, who had been taken to hospital in Mannheim after crashing heavily during the morning free session, had held him up deliberately.

"It is a great shame. This is one circuit where you do not do that sort of thing," he said.

Mansell waved his fist at the young Frenchman as he passed him after the chicane and later said he would "have leapt out of the car and said 'hello'" if he could have done.

Mansell's average speed was 252.219 kph.

The incident involving Mansell and Comas continued to reverberate after the session as Comas claimed that Mansell had blocked him on a fast lap Friday.

Sarcastically, the Frenchman said: "I am sorry I was driving on the same track as Mr. Mansell. I was trying to qualify for the race and he was on pole position."

Mansell said Comas was on his slowing-down lap and had blistered tyres, but Comas said he was able to get more speed from his tyres on his second lap.

"I was concentrating on my lap. That is why I did not look in my mirrors. I saw the blue flags, but what could I do?"

Mansell said: "We are averaging 160 mph not out there and for anyone not to look in their mirrors on this circuit is very dangerous."

Remarkably, since he had spent several hours in the middle of the day in the Mannheim clinic, Comas managed to improve his opening qualifying time and squeeze into the race by taking the 26th and final place on the grid.

Ferrari teammates Alain Prost and Jean Alesi are side by side on the third row.

Prost said Friday he was prepared to quit the Ferrari Formula One racing team before the end of his contract.

The French driver, under increasing press criticism in Italy this year, was speaking to Italian reporters during practice at the German Grand Prix.

"If the press doesn't like it ... even if I have a contract for 1992, I can say today ... if someone on the team wants to hire another driver next year, Senna or someone else, I will vacate my place," he said.

"Without a doubt I will do my job this year, 100 per cent, to win this championship. It is still possible even if it is very hard."

Prost is fourth in the World Drivers' Championship standings with 21 points from eight races — a distant 30 behind the leader, Ayrton Senna of Brazil.

In a television interview Thursday, an embittered Prost was highly critical of the Italian sports press, using a crude four-letter word to describe its professional quality.



Nigel Mansell

Italian sports reporters demanded an apology. Ferrari President Piero Fusero said he had reprimanded Prost over his choice of words but said the driver had the full confidence of the Ferrari team.

"Prost is with us for 1991 and he will be with us for 1992," Fusero said.

Generous adds King George to derby triumphs

ASCOT, England (R) — Odds-on favourite Generous romped to a record seven lengths victory in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes Saturday.

The victory completed a marvelous treble for Generous, winner of the Irish Derby and the English Derby this season.

Outsider hailsham made the early running but Generous, ridden by Alan Munro, was always in contention.

Lester Piggott, bidding for an eighth win in the race, took up the running on Saddlers' Hall entering the straight but Munro easily covered the move.

Munro asked Generous to step up the pace approaching the two furlong pole and the colt quickly put five lengths between himself and the chasing pack.

Sanglamore, last year's French Derby winner was second, a length ahead of third placed Rock Hopper.

Trainer Paul Cole was delighted with Generous.

"Generous has proved he's a true champion. I'm only a novice at these big races, it's nice to have a horse that people can hang their hat on like desert orchid," Cole said.

Generous is now being quoted as even favourite for his next race, the Prix De L'Arc De Triomphe at Longchamp in October.

"He'll be turned out to grass for the next month, then I'll get him ready for the Arc. He won't have a prep race, there's nothing suitable," Cole said.

With Cole not keen on Generous travelling to the U.S. for the Breeders' Cup, the Arc could be his last race.

"I would love to have him back in training next year, but it is looking increasingly likely he'll be off to stud," Cole said.

Indurain stressed supremacy in Tour de France time trial

MACON, France (R) — Miguel Indurain underlined his supremacy on the eve of his expected Tour de France victory with a pulsating stage win in the final time trial Saturday.

The Spaniard powered relentlessly along the 57-kilometre race against the clock from Lugny to Macon to beat closest rival Gianni Bugno by 27 seconds, stretching his overall lead over the Italian to three minutes 36 seconds before Sunday's final stage.

Outgoing champion Greg Lemond of the United States finished third in the 21st stage, 48 seconds behind Indurain.

Scores of Spanish supporters gathered at the finish, waving banners and chanting "Indurain, Indurain" to encourage their hero.

But he needed little help by then, his perfect style propelling him to all the best intermediate times from the 36-kilometre point onwards.

It meant disappointment for Bugno who had been seeking a stage win. "I was hoping to gain some time on him but he was too good. There was nothing I could do," he said.

It was the 27-year-old Indurain's second stage win of the tour, both earned in individual time trials. He won the eighth stage over 73 kilometres in Alencon exactly two weeks earlier.

U.S. and Spain lead in Federation Cup semis

NOTTINGHAM, England (AP) — Jennifer Capriati slammed passing shots down both lines to defeat Radka Zrubakova 6-3, 6-1 and give the United States a 1-0 lead over Czechoslovakia in their best-of-3 semifinal Saturday in the Federation Cup.

Mary Joe Fernandez was to face Czechoslovakia's Jana Novotna in the second singles match, with the doubles scheduled to follow.

Capriati needed just 48 minutes to defeat Zrubakova, who lost her serve twice in each set and was unable to break Capriati.

The Czechoslovak tried to take advantage of Capriati's lack of speed by repeatedly hitting drop shots. The strategy worked at first, but the American adjusted in the second set, anticipating the drop shots and returning them for winners.

Conchita Martinez gave top seed Spain a 1-0 lead over Germany in the other semifinal by defeating Barbara Rittner 6-4, 6-1. Martinez won 10 of the last 11 games in the match.

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

"He's always leaving me for another woman — Sara Lee, Betty Crocker, Mrs. Butterworth..."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA KUCHENKO
© 1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

AVOID THE PROBLEM

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
7 4
K Q
6 3 8 4 2
Q J 7 3

WEST
J 9 6 3 2
8 7 2
6
A 10 8 4

EAST
K 6 5
9 6 5 4
A 10 9 8
9 2

SOUTH
A Q 10
A J 10 3
Q 7 6
K 6 5

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 3 NT Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♠
Be wary of hands that look too easy to be true. Frequently that's what they are.

The auction was straightforward enough. South had a perfect one no trump opening bid and North was just a couple of points short of probing for slam. Certainly, game on the combined holding didn't seem to be in any jeopardy.

West led a low spade, and declarer captured East's king with the ace. With hardly giving the play a thought, South continued with a diamond to the jack and ace. Back came a spade. Declarer finessed the ten, losing to the jack, and a spade return cleared the suit.

It was only after cashing the queen of diamonds brought a club discard from West that declarer began to realize the predicament.

There were only eight fast tricks, and the ninth had to come from clubs. South tried to sneak a trick by leading a low club. Unfortunately, West was one of those defenders who could count to five. He flew up with the ace of clubs and rattled off two more spade tricks for down one.

A bit more care would have landed the contract. South can afford to lose a trick to West, since that defender cannot continue the spade attack profitably. Also, declarer was correct in going after diamonds first — he simply started the suit from the wrong hand!

At trick two declarer should cross to the queen of hearts and lead a low diamond toward the queen. If West has the ace, no return damages declarer, who has time to set up club tricks if the diamonds don't break.

As the cards lay, East can't fly up with the ace of diamonds without giving South four tricks in the suit. When the queen of diamonds wins, declarer needs only two more tricks to fulfill the contract. It's time for declarer to abandon diamonds in favor of clubs, where two tricks can be guaranteed simply by driving out the ace.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Marseille buys two young players

MARSEILLE, France (R) — Argentine midfielder Leonardo Rodriguez and Yugoslav striker Alen Boksic have agreed to join French champions Marseille but will not play for them until next season, sources close to the club said Saturday. Rodriguez, from Argentine side San Lorenzo, will probably be lent to a French club this season while Boksic, who plays for Hajduk Split, will stay in Yugoslavia, the sources said. Rodriguez was the revelation of the Argentine team which won the South American Soccer Championship last weekend. Sources close to San Lorenzo said he had been transferred for around \$1.33 million. No figures were available for the Boksic move. "I'm trying to buy young players, who, in a few years, will cost four or five times more than what I got them for," said Marseille chief Bernard Tapie in an interview with local newspaper Le Provençal. Tapie said he declined a Liverpool offer to sell England's striker John Barnes for 50 million francs (about \$8.6 million) because the player was too expensive.

S. African enters volleyball federation

CAIRO (AP) — The African Volleyball Federation announced Saturday it has granted membership to a new South African group despite a boycott of the white-ruled state by the Organisation of African Unity. The move means that South African volleyball players or officials will participate at least as observers in next September's all-Africa games in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. Chairman-Nasef Selim of the African Volleyball Federation, just returned from South Africa, said his organisation accepted the application of the South African Federation for Volleyball because "there is no apartheid in... volleyball in South Africa."

U.S. Open prize money to total \$7.25 m

NEW YORK (R) — The total prize money for this year's U.S. Open Tennis Tournament will be \$7,250,000, a record for the event, organisers have said. The prize money, which again will be split equally between the men's and women's competitions, exceeds \$7 million for the first time. Last year's total was \$6,349,250, the organisers said. Singles winners in the tournament, which runs from Aug. 26 through Sept. 8, will earn \$400,000 each and winning doubles teams will split \$164,500.

Egypt reaches African cup finals

CAIRO (R) — Egypt drew 2-2 with Tunisia in an African Nations Cup Group 20 soccer qualifier to reach next year's finals in Senegal. Egypt, needing just a draw to secure a place in the finals, attacked from the start but lacked finishing sharpness and encountered rugged opposition from the Tunisians. Defender Ismail Yousef scored with a header in the 45th minute to break the deadlock and give Egypt the lead. Tunisia counter-attacked in the second half and their efforts paid off when star striker Mohammad Al Mahjoubi equalised seven minutes after the interval. Mahjoubi added a second nine minutes later, taking advantage of a defence gap. Some 90,000 fans, waving Egyptian flags and shouting in support of the home side, helped Egypt reverse the tide and midfielder Magdi Abdul Ghani equalised in the 70th minute. Egypt and Tunisia had four points each from three previous matches in Group 2 but Egypt had a superior goal difference.

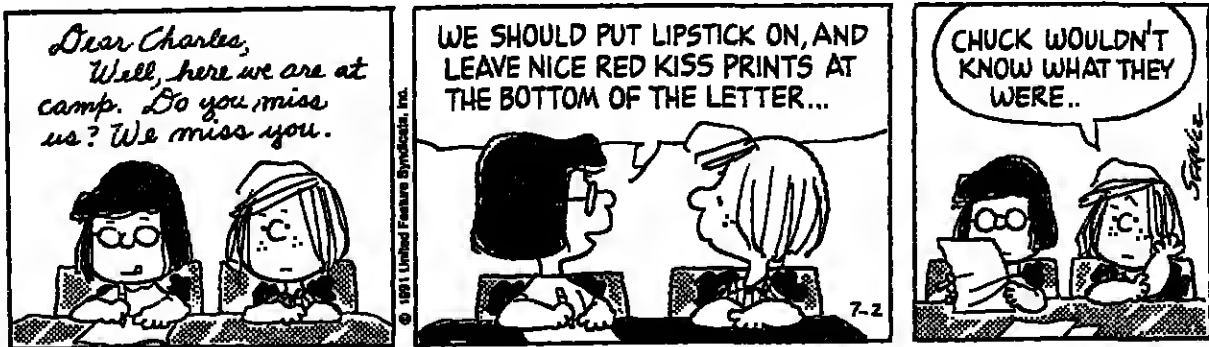
Lewis targets long jump world record

SESTRIERE, Italy (R) — Olympic champion Carl Lewis said he would try to break fellow American Bob Beamon's 22-year-old long jump world record next week. If he succeeds, it could be the American's swansong in the event. Lewis said in New York last weekend he would no longer compete in the long jump if he broke the record in the high-altitude Italian resort of Sestriere next Wednesday. Injury prevented Lewis, unbeaten in the event for 10 years, from trying in Sestriere last year to beat Beamon's record of 8.90 metres set at altitude in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. A spokesman for the organisers said Friday Lewis's Santa Monica Club team mate Leroy Burrell aimed to improve on the 100 metres world record of 9.90 seconds he set last month. Both he and Lewis arrived in Sestriere Thursday.

Novacek, Gustafsson advance

HILVERSUM, Netherlands (AP) — Second-seeded Karel Novacek of Czechoslovakia beat Argentine Franco Davin 7-6 (7-3), 2-6, 6-2 Friday to advance to the semifinals of the \$250,000 Dutch Open. Fourth-seeded Magnus Gustafsson lost a first set tie-breaker, but rallied to beat Switzerland's Marc Rosset 6-7 (3-7), 6-2, 6-4. Novacek will play Gustafsson, whom he beat in the final of the German Open in Hamburg in May. Dutchman Mark Koevermans, who upset No. 1-seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain Wednesday, will face Spaniard Jordi Arrese in the other semifinal.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JULY 28, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You have in your consciousness a desire to really produce results of a very positive order so get out early and put into effect that plan that you have been considering without the consent of associates.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is the time to open conversations with those in official or an executive position to find out just what they will do to aid your career.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have so many new ideas you hardly know which to start on first but actually you do not know enough about any of them so study all the facts.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your desire now is certainly to get rid of obligations and be sure you do not overpay or underpay which is quite possible unless you use care.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You find that whatever business allies you can contact will help you somewhat to make up your mind but the final decision is yours.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have much work to do and if you work alone steadily and keep your mind focused upon the jobs to be done you can get through the day without any mishap.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You now find that most everyone you see wants you to have a good time and so do you but keep your purse zipped or you greatly lessen your well-earned security.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Whatever you have to do that is basic and that requires consider-

able careful effort on your part is very good for you now so keep plugging away.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you avoid making that sarcastic comment that comes so quickly to your lips now you win a battle and save some vital, usual companions goodwill.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make a point now to keep your attention riveted upon finances and possessions and you can save yourself a bad mistake through thoughtlessness.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There are some questionable activities you are being tempted to engage in but if you keep yourself above reproach you will make big headway.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have many behind the scenes and intimate things to do and these are your best outlets today and tonight so steer clear of the limelight.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your usual friends are very preoccupied with their own anxieties and are not apt to give you as much attention as you wish so accept it in an understanding manner.

Today's child: If your child was born today she or he is endowed with far more vitality than the average child and it will be necessary that from earliest possible days you see that this energy is channeled in constructive directions. Exercise, such as controlled sports may be a part of this programme.

"The stars impel, they do not compel." What you make of your life is largely up to you.

I live in a beautiful new world since I started wearing my birth stone.

World Resources - Dajani & Co. Inc.
Jewelers - Gems
Amman - Rio De Janeiro
Amman - Amra Hotel - 6th. circle.

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

UTOLC

ILDOY

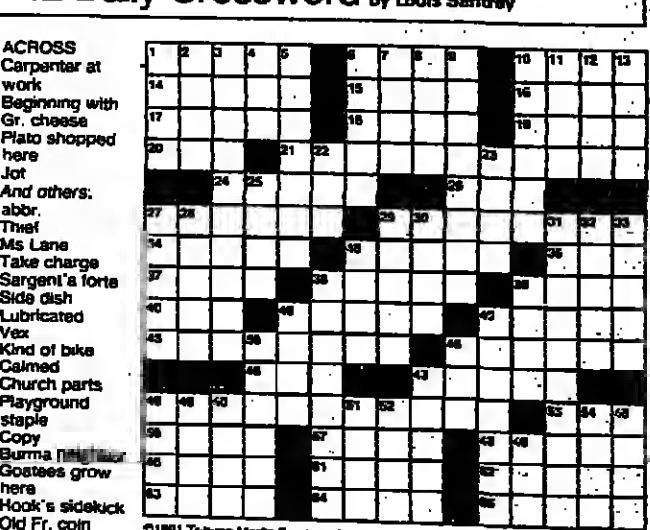
YAWALY

GYRINT

Answer: "C O O L" UNDER "S O U P S"

(Answers tomorrow)

THE Daily Crossword by Louis Santrey



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1 Across: 10 Gr. cheese
2 Across: 14 Plato shopped here
3 Across: 15 Jot
4 Across: 16 And others:
5 Across: 17 Thief
6 Across: 18 Ms. Lane
7 Across: 19 Take charge
8 Across: 20 Sargeant's forte
9 Across: 21 Side dish
10 Across: 24 Lubricated
11 Across: 26 Vex
12 Across: 27 Kind of bike
13 Across: 29 Calmed
14 Across: 34 Church parts
15 Across: 35 Playground staple
16 Across: 36 Copy
17 Across: 37 Burma highlight
18 Across: 38 Gossamer grow here
19 Across: 39 Hook's sidekick
20 Across: 41 Silly soul
21 Across: 42 Courage
22 Across: 43 Lizard and croc
23 Across: 45 Reed
24 Across: 46 Actor Holbrook
25 Across: 47 Tough question
26 Across: 48 Fountain treat
27 Across: 53 Opening
28 Across: 56 Ancient land
29 Across: 57 Legal bargain
30 Across: 58 Ryan or Fiebig
31 Across: 60 "Eternal City"
32 Across: 61 Agre garb
33 Across: 62 Father of soul
34 Across: 63 Lamb's garnish
35 Across: 64 Knotted
36 Across: 65 A Ford

10 Rabbit hunter
11 Needle case
12 Bedtime place
13 Pub orders
14 Sleep-study
15 Opening
16 Ornamental fastener
17 Homes follower
18 Old Gar. coin
19 Kind of chess
20 Prospector's place
21 Diner order
22 Buttoned blades
23 Inventor of farm machines
24 Clodhopper
25 Brookdown
26 Regal address
27 — Carlo
28 Mayratti
29 Gals
30 River to the North Sea
31 Maui meal

47 Clear
48 Unditched
49 Lined up
50 Spectly
51 Czech or Pole
52 — Goriot
53 Wife of Henry VIII
54 — herring

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	New York Close
	Thu 25/7/1991	Fri 26/7/1991
Sterling Pound	1.9535	1.9620
Deutsche Mark	1.7565	1.7430
Swiss Franc	1.5330	1.5227
French Franc	5.9745	5.9342
Japanese Yen	132.63	137.60
European Currency Unit	1.7787	1.7775

USD vs. STC

London Opening 10.15 a.m. LAST

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.00	6.15	6.50
Sterling Pound	11.12	10.93	10.81	10.75
Deutsche Mark	8.81	8.93	9.18	9.43
Swiss Franc	7.66	7.81	7.81	7.68
French Franc	9.50	9.50	9.56	9.68
Japanese Yen	7.37	7.37	7.15	6.96
European Currency Unit	9.87	10.03	10.17	10.05

Interbank bid rates for currencies according to U.S. Dollar 1000.00 or equivalent.

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.00	6.15	6.50
Sterling Pound	11.12	10.93	10.81	10.75
Deutsche Mark	8.81	8.93	9.18	9.43
Swiss Franc	7.66	7.81	7.81	7.68
French Franc	9.50	9.50	9.56	9.68
Japanese Yen	7.37	7.37	7.15	6.96
European Currency Unit	9.87	10.03	10.17	10.05

21 Kari

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 27.7.1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	1.50	1.50
Sterling Pound	1.550	1.558
Deutsche Mark	1.392	1.396
Swiss Franc	1.450	1.453
French Franc	1.155	1.161
Japanese Yen	1.477	1.502
Dutch Guilder	1.445	1.455
Swedish Krona	1.105	1.109
Haitian Lira	0.926	0.931
Belgian Franc	0.1908	0.1915

Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 27/7/1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7820	1.7930
Lebanese Lira	0.070	0.070
Saudi Riyal	1.626	1.635
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Omani Riyal	1.653	1.664
Egyptian Pound	1.700	1.705
Omani Riyal	1.7450	1.7550
UAE Dirham	1.653	1.664
Greek Drachma	1.3400	1.3600
Cypriot Pound	1.4200	1.4400

Per 100

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	17/7/1991	24/7/1991
All-Share	116.24	111.02
Banking Sector	105.32	106.09
Insurance Sector	116.87	119.37
Industry Sector	115.00	115.76
Services Sector	126.53	127.70

December 31, 1990 - 100

Japan lends Romania \$100m

BUCHAREST (R) — Japan is to grant Romania a \$100 million loan to help the country implement a market economy following the overthrow of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Economy and Finance Minister Eugen Dijmarescu has said.

"Japan decided to grant Romania a \$100 million loan as a contribution to the financial package offered to this country by the G-24, to support our reforms," Mr. Dijmarescu told the state news agency Rompres.

The loan is part of a \$1 billion package pledged by the Group of 24 industrialised countries earlier this year.

The European Community, which belongs to the G-24, authorised a first payment this month to Romania of \$130 million.

Western financial assistance to Romania has lagged behind that given to some other ex-communist East European states.

EC predicts higher unemployment

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — The European Community (EC) commission predicted in a report that unemployment in the 12-nation EC will climb through the end of 1992.

In its annual review of EC employment trends, the commission also said the EC faces a shortage of skilled labour and noted wide gaps persist between the EC's richest and poorest areas.

"We are getting into a period which is not as favourable as the last few years," EC Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreu said in introducing the report.

The report predicted unemployment would average 9.2 per cent next year, up from an expected 8.7 per cent average this year.

Unemployment has risen steadily since mid-1990 amid a broad economic downturn fuelled in part by the Gulf crisis. May's 8.7 per cent rate was the highest in two years.

Mrs. Papandreu said Britain would see a notably dramatic rise from 8.4 per cent unemployment in May to 10.8 per cent next year. An economic upturn expected to take hold in the second half of 1991 should lead to lower jobless rates by 1993, the report noted.

Reviewing recent trends, Mrs. Papandreu told reporters the poorest EC nations — Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain — have made little progress in bringing their economies up to the standards of their richer neighbours.

Between 1985 and 1989, she said, the jobless rate rose by 1.5 per cent in the four countries while it fell by one per cent elsewhere in the EC.

Mrs. Papandreu added 1990 per capita income in the four

nations was less than 70 per cent of the average elsewhere — the same discrepancy as in 1970.

"The problem remains very serious," Mrs. Papandreu said. EC officials worry that persistent gaps between richer and poorer states will foil plans to set up an economic and monetary union of the 12 nations in the mid-1990s.

The report warned that EC competitiveness is threatened by an endemic shortage of skilled workers and called for tougher education standards.

In the EC, Ireland had the highest jobless rate (17.1 per cent), followed by Spain (15.5), Italy (9.8), France (9.4 per cent), Belgium (8.5), Britain (8.4), Denmark (8.4), Germany (4.6), Portugal (4.3) and Luxembourg (1.9). Figures were unavailable for Greece and the Netherlands.

According to another major report, the unemployment rate for the industrialised democracies will rise sharply this year, and economic prospects for eastern Europe are worse.

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in its annual report on global labour trends, said the average unemployment rate for its 24 members would rise from 6.2 to 7.1 per cent this year, boosting the number of unemployed to about 28 million.

The largest increases were forecast for Britain (5.5 to 9.6 per cent), Australia (6.9 to 9.9), Finland (3.4 to 5.9), Greece (7.7 to 9.0), Canada (8.1 to 10.1), New Zealand (7.8 to 9.3), Sweden (1.5 to 2.8), and the United States (5.5 to 6.7).

The higher jobless rates were forecast to last at least through 1992.

"The prospects for a recovery

appear favourable, but it is unlikely to be a strong one," the report said. "Unemployment has risen significantly in many countries and will probably continue to increase well into the beginning of the economic upturn."

Of the 28 million unemployed, 8.4 million would be in the United States, more than triple the next-highest figure of 2.7 million in Italy, the report said.

The report said the labour market in central and eastern Europe was under "great strain" as the former socialist countries abandoned policies which virtually guaranteed jobs to everyone in the work force.

In Poland, the number of registered unemployed jumped from 568,200 in June 1990 to 1,322,100 in March, the report said. Poland's jobless rate climbed from 3.1 to 7.1 per cent during that period, while Bulgaria's soared from 0.5 to 3.0, the OECD said.

"Over the longer term, the pressure of migration from central and eastern European countries in transition is likely to become stronger," the report said. "There is no sign that the sharp declines in economic activity in these countries will come to an early end... many firms are making heavy losses and major plant closures are to be expected."

The OECD countries would receive new flows of migrants from developing countries, as well as from eastern Europe, the report said.

To cope with unemployment, the OECD recommended programmes aimed at making all workers as competitive as possible, with counselling and training to maximise their readiness to work.

It said any job creation schemes "should be framed to avoid creating dead-end, low-productivity jobs or subsidising jobs that would have been created anyway."



Atef Sedki Egypt delays appointing public sector minister for 18 months

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has postponed appointing a minister to overhaul its large public sector for 18 months, Prime Minister Atef Sedki said in remarks published Friday.

The postponement reflected a gradual approach to public sector reform, part of a package agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May, Mr. Sedki told reporters.

His remarks were published in all Cairo newspapers.

Mr. Sedki was originally expected to appoint the minister soon after parliament passed a public sector law in May.

The idea is to streamline the process of setting up holding companies with wide powers to restructure public companies, either by privatising them or making them more efficient.

Several ministers will oversee the process for the moment but there will be one minister within 18 months, Mr. Sedki said.

Western economists in Cairo say personnel will be key to Egypt's reform programme. If those in charge are not committed to the reforms, or if no unified structure emerges, painful but necessary austerity measures may be diluted.

Mr. Sedki said state firms would eventually be able to hire and fire, choose their own suppliers and market their products like any private company.

State company managers might stay on after restructuring, provided they were competent, and state companies short of cash would be able to sell shares on the stock market, he added.

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Kuwait loads first crude oil tanker since invasion

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait loaded two million barrels of oil for export Saturday, its first shipment since Iraq invaded the emirate almost a year ago.

"We are shipping about 264,000 tonnes which is equivalent to about two million barrels... I am very happy to see this day," jubilant Oil Minister Hamoud Abdulla Al Raqba told a news conference.

"Our Kuwaiti people and their friends did a tremendous job to achieve this in such a very short time," he said aboard the tanker Thormess at the Mina Al Ahmadi terminal, sealed off by Iraqi mines during the Gulf war.

Nearly half of the 600 fires set by Iraqi troops in Kuwaiti oil wells have been doused since the war ended in February.

The Thormess's captain said his ship would leave port Sunday. Earlier reports had said the Thormess would depart Saturday.

A second tanker would leave with its cargo of crude within the

next 10 days, Sheikh Raqba said. Sheikh Raqba said the invasion had caused up to \$75 billion worth of damage to Kuwait's oil industry, including lost production. Before the war, Kuwait produced two million barrels per day (b/d).

An average of six to seven million barrels a day has been going up in smoke since the war ended.

Sheikh Raqba said that by Friday 249 wells had been put out and Kuwait's output had reached 115,000 barrels a day. This excluded a daily production of about 200,000 barrels from the Neutral Zone which Kuwait shares with Saudi Arabia. The emirate's share is one third of the total output.

Kuwait's production had been previously estimated at 140,000 b/d.

Sheikh Raqba said the cost of putting out all the well fires could reach \$1 billion.

Five U.S. and two Canadian firms have been tackling the fires

since March and up to 16 fire-fighting teams will be in Kuwait by next month.

"We will celebrate the control of the whole Maqwa and Al Ahmadi fields by next month," said Sheikh Raqba, adding that he hoped Kuwait would be able to meet its own needs for refined products by September.

The emirate, whose oil exports were its major foreign currency earner, is seeking billions of dollars in foreign borrowing to compensate for the lost oil income and to finance post-war reconstruction.

Kuwait's main deep water export terminal of Sea Island is still out of action because of war damage.

Mine clearing operations by Western navies in the Gulf have made navigation to Kuwait safer. Western navies operating more than 30 vessels clearing Iraqi mines in the Gulf said this month all shipping routes would be clear of mines by the end of July.

U.S. reports weak 0.4 per cent GNP increase in second quarter

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy started growing again in the spring, the government reported Friday, but the barely perceptible 0.4 per cent annual increase raised new concerns over whether the recession is really over.

The Commerce Department said that the gross national product (GNP), the country's total production of goods and services, expanded in the April-June quarter following two consecutive quarterly declines.

GNP fell by 1.6 per cent in the October-December period and an even sharper 2.8 per cent in the January-March period, meeting the classic definition of a recession as at least two consecutive declines in GNP.

While the Bush administration believes that a return to growth is a valid signal that the recession is indeed over, private economists are warning of the possibility of a "double-dip" recession in which GNP grows for a quarter or two only to slip back into the negative range as the recovery falters and the recession returns with full force.

Even if that scenario does not develop, analysts believe that a variety of problems facing the United States, from strains on the banking system to an overload of consumer debt, will make this expansion the weakest in U.S. history.

Michael Evans, head of a Washington forecasting firm, said that he was looking for the GNP to climb at a modest annual rate of around two per cent in the second half of the year, similar to the lackluster growth in the period before President Saddam Hussein's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait toppled the country into a recession.

"The economy was just inebriated along before the war and that is exactly what we have returned to," Mr. Evans said. "We have removed the problems associated with the war but nothing else has changed."

Mr. Evans, however, said he was not in the camp that was fearful that the second quarter GNP increase would be followed by further declines.

"Despite today's weak GNP number, the recession is over," Mr. Evans said. "We will get better growth in the third quarter."

The administration, facing a presidential election next year, has kept up pressure on the Federal Reserve (Fed) to boost economic demand by lowering interest rates.

However, the Fed has resisted recent pleas out of concern that inflation could get out of hand

once the recovery begins. Last week, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told Congress that he believed the possibility of a double-dip recession was low.

The 0.4 per cent GNP growth rate in the second quarter was significantly lower than expected by analysts, many of whom were looking for the GNP to expand at an annual rate of one per cent or better.

Given the small GNP increase, which could be revised away altogether in upcoming reports, and a string of other weak indicators recently, analysts said the possibility of a double-dip recession cannot be ruled out.

Analysts note that in five of the last eight recessions, including the last downturn in 1981-82, there was one positive GNP quarter followed by further declines before the recession was finally over.

The administration contends that the positive GNP figure in the second quarter will mark the actual end of the recession. In a forecast released last week, the administration predicted that GNP growth will strengthen for the rest of the year and by 1992

the economy will be growing again at a healthy annual rate of 3.2 per cent. By contrast, the administration predicted GNP growth for this year will post a 0.2 per cent decline.

Friday's GNP report showed that inflation, as measured by an index tied to the GNP, showed improvement in the second quarter, rising at an annual rate of just three per cent, following a jump of 5.2 per cent in the first three months.

The GNP report showed the economy grew at a rate of \$4.3 billion in the second quarter after declining at a rate of \$29.3 billion in the first and \$16.6 billion in the fourth quarter.

The small gain reflected large cross currents in the economy. Consumer spending, which had fallen for two consecutive quarters, shot up at a rate of \$23.5 billion in the second quarter. But offsetting this strength was a huge jump in the nation's trade deficit, which subtracted \$25.7 billion from the economy in the second quarter as a small gain in exports was swamped by a huge jump in imports. Half of the import gain reflected rising oil imports.

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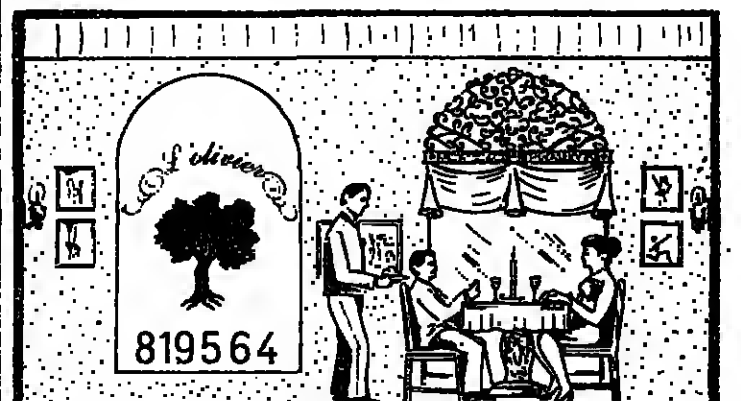
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Some Slovenes nostalgic about Yugoslavia

LJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Most Slovenes now believe that the rest of Yugoslavia won't use force to keep them in the federation. With time and negotiation, an independent Slovenia could be a reality.

But as the prospect of real independence approaches, many Slovenes are thinking hard about what that independence could cost.

The federal government in Belgrade has given no guarantee that it will let the Alpine republic become an independent state, and complex economic disputes still have to be thrashed out.

Yet the federal government has offered to withdraw its troops from Slovenia by the end of October. On Friday it allowed Slovenia's airspace to reopen. With the decrease in tension, thoughts are turning rapidly to what independence might really be like — and some Slovenes are worried.

Slovenia has been part of Yugoslavia for 70 years. Slovenes stood tall within the federation, envied by those in other republics as Yugoslavia's most modern and prosperous citizens.

Now, they face life on their own in a tough world economy. "I think that we should celebrate only when we are sure everything is OK," commented student Olga Vukovic. "And even then, it will feel strange not being part of Yugoslavia anymore."

"The Slovenian economy is not cheap enough or good enough to sell outside Yugoslavia," complained Tomaz Grjovec, a linguist.

To be sure, the rest of Yugoslavia would suffer heavily from Slovenia's secession. Slovenia accounts for nearly 30 per cent of Yugoslav exports. The republic's gross national product per capita of \$6,000 is double the federal average.

But economic dependence is a two-edged sword. Slovenia, which has Yugoslavia's most developed manufacturing sector, traded 32 per cent of its manufactures last year to the fellow republics.

Slovenia is thus vulnerable to economic pressure as it tries to reach agreement with federal authorities on its share of Yugoslav debts and assets.

The federal government and the largest republic, Serbia, are unlikely to give formal blessing to Slovenia's departure without some kind of payment from the northern republic.

Although the Ljubljana government maintains it has paid more into the common Yugoslav pot than it owes, some see problems ahead if the republic refuses to buy its way out.

Former Vice Premier Jozef Mencinger, who resigned in May partly because he thought Slovenian independence was being pushed too quickly, warned of a possible federally ordered trade boycott.

"We will have no market in the East and we are not (yet) competitive in the West," Mr. Mencinger said in an interview. He added that a 30-per cent wage cut would have to be ordered in such a case to make Slovene goods more competitive on Western markets.

Boycott or no, Slovenia is bound to lose some markets in Yugoslavia as part of the price of independence.

Among Slovene companies unlikely to survive are Adria Airways, which largely depended on carrying Yugoslav migrant workers to and from West Europe and the Kompas Travel Agency, which dealt mostly in package deals to other parts of Yugoslavia. Mr. Mencinger said.

Such developments are bound to hurt ongoing attempts to retool the economy along capitalist lines by stripping it of the last vestiges of Communist mismanagement. Mr. Mencinger said he expected living standards to continue falling at least until mid-1992. Unemployment, at 5.7 per cent last year, will likely reach 8 per cent by next year, he added.

The 50-year-old economist also expressed some concern about money supply. Slovenia continues to use the Yugoslav dinar as currency, and dinar availability is tightening because of a decision by the Yugoslav Central Bank to freeze supply to the independence-minded republic.

Such economic problems have many Slovenes worried.

Mr. Grjovec said he and colleagues have been told to brace for a wage cut next month. Pest exterminator Matjaz Sircel, 30, said his company might also reduce salaries.

24 die in Yugoslav ethnic war

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (Agencies) — Slovenian police prepared Saturday to take control of the breakaway republic's international borders, while the federal presidency said troops would remain deployed in Croatia to curb ethnic violence there.

Yugoslavia News Agency, Tanjug, said Saturday that ethnic violence between Croatian security forces and armed ethnic Serbs who oppose Croatian independence left 24 dead Friday.

A statement released by Yugoslavia's eight-man presidency on Friday warned that the situation in Croatia "threatens to escalate into an all-out war." It said a truce is a "prerequisite for finding a political solution to the crisis."

In Slovenia, a ceasefire has held for more than three weeks. Federal authorities Friday permitted commercial flights over Slovenia for the first time in a month. Austria said it would make direct loans to Slovenian companies, the Austria Press Agency said.

Slovenia's police are to take full control of the republic's borders with Austria, Italy and Hungary beginning Saturday, Slovenia's Interior Ministry announced.

Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on June 25, and dozens of combatants were killed in Slovenia when federal army troops waged sporadic battles for weeks with Slovene fighters.

The army has agreed to withdraw from Slovenia, federal generals decided Wednesday that Slovene recruits and officers could leave army ranks by Aug. 15.

But violence has escalated in Croatia, where more than 100 deaths have been reported since fighting erupted there.

The casualties Friday included Egon Scotland, a photographer for the German-based *Sneddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper, whose car was attacked by ethnic Serb gunmen.

The eight-man collective federal presidency, which formally commands the federal army, said

it would order the army to return to the barracks in Croatia only after the demobilisation of all militia groups.

The presidency also said Croatia's security forces should not be sent to ethnic Serb areas.

That decision was opposed by Stipe Mesic, Croatia's member in the presidency and its current chairman, the statement said. The presidency's demand for a ceasefire was adopted unanimously.

Croatia accuses the Serb-led army of siding with ethnic Serbs, whose demands to secede from Croatia are opposed by Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman and other Croat leaders. The Serbian-inhabited area comprises about a fourth of the republic's territory.

Army officials say the troops are needed to stop a bloodbath between the two rival ethnic groups.

Radisa Gacic, the federal health and social welfare minister, released figures from the Red Cross saying more than 44,000 people have fled their homes in Croatia to escape the violence.

Croatian Radio reported heavy

fighting near Glina, 50 kilometres south of the republic's capital Zagreb, and said five Croatian policemen had been killed. It was not clear if they were included in Tanjug's death toll.

Croatian defence forces also fought a three-hour battle with the federal army on the May 25 Bridge between Croatia and the Republic of Serbia, but no deaths were reported. The army is trying to keep the peace in Croatian troubled spots.

About 70 people have been killed in the last week. The new fighting erupted despite a call for a ceasefire by the collective state presidency on Friday, increasing fears that Yugoslavia's worst ethnic violence since World War II was beyond control.

Amid fears that violence could spill over the borders, Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic met prime ministers and foreign ministers from Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland in the Adriatic resort of Dubrovnik.

"I do think a compromise will be found," said Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis.

Floods kill 16 in Manila, central Luzon

MANILA (AP) — Floods brought by monsoon rains have killed at least 16 people in Manila and in central Luzon and forced the evacuation of about 20,000 people, officials said Saturday.

Two people have been killed in President Corason Aquino's hometown of Concepcion in Tarlac province since Monday, when monsoon rains unleashed tonnes of mud, volcanic ash and other debris from the slope of Mount Pinatubo, which has been erupting since June 9.

Maj. Nicolas Ababon, spokesman of the regional Disaster Coordinating Council, said more than 17,000 people from the region fled to shelters in Concepcion and the nearby town of Mexico.

The Philippine Red Cross said the latest figures brought to more than 300,000 the number of people in evacuation centres in the area since Mount Pinatubo began erupting on June 9.

The rains also flooded many areas of Manila, stranding people

during the evening rush hour and forcing at least 3,800 to flee their homes.

Lourdes Masing, spokeswoman of the Red Cross, said six people died of electrocution in separate incidents in Quezon City's Tatalon district.

A Yemeni student, identified as Abdul Rahman Omer, 23, died Friday when he was accidentally electrocuted while switching on the fuse box in his boarding house in Manila's Sampaloc district, police said.

3 killed in German rail accident

MAGDEBURG, Germany (AP) — A crowded passenger train and a freight train hauling tanks of gasoline collided head-on Saturday in a thunderous explosion, killing three people and injuring at least 21, police said.

Firefighters squirted foam on the towering flames that raged for nearly 12 hours after the crash at 1:03 a.m. (23:03 GMT) in the city of Oebisfelde, on the former east-west German border.

The eastbound freight train drove through a stop signal at a switching yard before it collided with the westbound passenger train, according to police in Magdeburg and a spokesman with the Reichsbahn, the national train company.

It remained unclear whether the engineer of the freight train disregarded the signal or was waved through.

Police in eastern Germany's Saxony-Anhalt state said three were confirmed dead and 21 were injured.

The three confirmed dead were two engineers in the passenger train and the engineer in the freight train, police said. None of the passengers were killed, they said.

The Reichsbahn reported 35 injuries and said that three people, all engineers, were missing. Police appeared to have the more current information.

The passenger train booked full with 340 people travelling from the east German city of Dresden to the west German city of Cologne.

Yeltsin asked to suspend ban on Communist cells

MOSCOW (R) — The head of the Soviet Union's Constitutional Review Committee appealed to Russian President Boris Yeltsin Saturday to suspend a decree banning Communist Party cells from workplaces throughout the Russian Federation.

Sergei Alexeyev told a news conference his committee had no power to enforce a suspension, but he hoped Mr. Yeltsin would act on his own to lift the ban until the committee could review its legality. The ban is to take effect on Aug. 4.

"We have appealed to the president of the Russian Federation with a request to suspend his decree until the end of our deliberations," Mr. Alexeyev said.

"We hope for his goodwill and respect for legality, as well as for his understanding of the situation."

Mr. Yeltsin, who crushed Communist Party candidates on June 12 in the first democratic election in his republic's history, moved last week to gut the party's last stronghold by driving it from Russian factories and offices.

The order touched off a firestorm of criticism from Communist officials. President Mikhail Gorbachev, who also heads the party, said it would stoke tensions.

He threatened to nullify it with a decree of his own, which could trigger a new clash between the Soviet Union's two most powerful politicians.

Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Gorbachev appeared to have agreed a truce, after months of bitter feuding, with an April accord on a new draft union treaty redefining

relations between the Kremlin and the 15 Soviet republics.

The Communist Party's controlling Central Committee denounced Mr. Yeltsin's decree and appealed to Mr. Gorbachev and to Mr. Alexeyev's committee, which is similar to a constitutional court, to look into its legality.

"This illegal act delivers a blow to hopes for achievement of civic accord and creates unjustified political tension in the largest union republic," the Central Committee said in a statement Friday.

Mr. Alexeyev, who has said he favours social Democratic ideas, declined to comment on the merits of Mr. Yeltsin's decree, but said his committee banned its own Communist Party cell 18 months ago.

The committee would consider only the parts of the decree which dealt with general human rights and would not give any ruling on whether Mr. Yeltsin had exceeded his powers as president of the Russian Federation, Mr. Alexeyev said.

He declined to give any timetable for the committee's ruling but said it would also touch on similar laws adopted in Moldova and in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Political party cells in these republics and in Georgia and Armenia were banned after Communists standing for election were thrashed by nationalist opponents.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree, which sent shockwaves through party officials, appeared to provide Mr. Gorbachev with a welcome diversion in his struggle to reform the party.

Kashmir rebels launch big attack on Indian army

QAZIGUND, India (R) — Rebels in Kashmir have launched one of their biggest-ever attacks on the Indian army, but witnesses said Saturday that they inflicted far fewer casualties than they claimed.

The witnesses, none of whom wished to be identified, said at least 300 members of the fundamentalist Hizb-ul-Mujahideen ambushed an army convoy on July 23. One said he saw eight soldiers who might have been dead.

The militants, in a statement first issued in neighbouring Pakistan, said they killed 100 soldiers in the ambush about 60 kilometres from Srinagar, summer capital of India's Jammu and Kashmir state, its only Muslim-majority region.

They said members of military families were among the dead and apologised for killing them, saying the attackers did not know non-military personnel would be travelling in the convoy.

Casualties on this scale would make it by far the most successful operation by the militants since the anti-Indian revolt erupted in January 1990. Police have reported more than 3,000 deaths in the campaign.

But a Defence Ministry spokesman in New Delhi snorted in derision at the idea of 100 dead. "Even if one Jawan (soldier) dies, you would know about it. We don't allow a Jawan to die silently," he said.

But the spokesman admitted he had no firm information about the ambush, near Qazigund on the only main road linking Jammu and Kashmir to the rest of India.

Witnesses, who said they watched from close by, said between 300 and 400 rebels moved into ambush positions in trees close to the road, which is flanked by rice and vegetable fields, about three hours before the convoy appeared in mid-afternoon.

China cracks down on Mongolian dissidents

PEKING (R) — China has launched a crackdown on nationalist dissidents in Inner Mongolia, arresting two leaders and putting 36 under arrest, the human rights organisation Asia Watch has said.

The New York-based organisation released what it said was a copy of an internal Chinese directive marked "top secret," detailing the crackdown in the northern frontier region.

Asia Watch also issued an appeal by a group calling itself the Inner Mongolian League for the Defence of Human Rights written on May 21, 10 days after the crackdown began.

Two leaders, intellectuals identified as Huchentegus and Wang Manglai, were arrested on May 15, the appeal said. Police placed 36 members under house arrest.

"Mongolians hope that their plight will cause concern on the part of the international community," the appeal said.

"Under the present circumstances, any voice of concern and any form of practical assistance from the democratic countries and the various human rights organisations will inspire and encourage the people here," it said.

Asia Watch issued a statement calling for the immediate release of those in detention and asking Peking to allow similar Chinese human rights organisations to function openly.

China's Communist leaders are concerned its Mongolian minority has been influenced by the democracy movement just across the border in the independent Republic of Mongolia that resulted

in free elections there last year, diplomats said.

Inner Mongolia is a vast region twice the size of France. Its three million ethnic Mongolians, many scratching out a difficult existence on the fringes of the Gobi Desert, are far outnumbered by 17 million ethnic Han Chinese, many of whom settled there after the 1949 revolution.

Meanwhile an official Australian delegation has painted a gloomy picture of China's human rights situation, saying it foresaw few changes and did not expect the release of political prisoners.

"I don't think anybody should expect dramatic changes in China in human rights," delegation leader Senator Chris Schacht said in an interview Friday with Australian reporters in Shanghai.

A transcript of the interview was made available by the Australian embassy Saturday.

"As much as I would like to see all the political prisoners released, I don't think that is going to happen automatically," he said.

The group, which included speakers of Chinese and Tibetan, had no access to political prisoners and visits to prisons were perfunctory, Sen. Schacht said.

"I think we did achieve a major aim, which was to engage the Chinese in a dialogue — even though many of them didn't like it — at the official level about human rights," Sen. Schacht said.

Vice Premier Zhu Rongji invited the delegation to return to China.

Castro vows continued hardline rule in Cuba

HAVANA (AP) — President Fidel Castro blamed capitalism for causing the "tragedy" of formerly communist Eastern Europe and defiantly pledged that his own hardline Communist state would not reform despite its crumbling economy.

Much of Mr. Castro's annual Revolution Day speech Friday, which lasted almost three hours, went to lauding South African opposition leader Nelson Mandela, who opened the ceremonies in the town of Matanzas, 110 kilometres east of here.

Mr. Castro drew a standing ovation when he said the names of schools named after Karl Marx or Vladimir Lenin would not be changed, an indirect allusion to changes that have taken place since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

"In this revolution there will be no changes of names or ideas," he said.

Mr. Mandela praised Cuba as one of the few friends his once-outlawed African National Congress (ANC) had, and referred to "a vicious, imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the gains made in Cuba." He said

oppression remains in South Africa despite the official repeal of segregation laws.

"We have reason to believe that we have not yet succeeded in bringing this home to the government... and we will not hesitate to use power to convince them," he said.

Cuba and the Soviet Union were major financial and moral backers of the ANC when it was banned by the South African government from 1960 to 1990. The ANC maintains close ties with the South African Communist Party.

Mr. Mandela criticised U.S. President George Bush for not taking the ANC's views into account before lifting U.S. sanctions against South Africa.

"In this context we value the friendship of Cuba very very much," he said.

Mr. Castro awarded Mr. Mandela, who spent 27 years as a political prisoner, the Jose Marti Medal, Cuba's highest honour. "I do not think I deserve it," Mr. Mandela said. "It should go to those who already have won the freedom of their people."

Sri Lankan rebels continue attack on army camp

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil rebels pounded an army camp in Sri Lanka's north with mortar fire for a second night and held at bay a relief column battling to reach the besieged garrison, a military spokesman said Saturday.

"The camp was attacked again with mortars and small arms," the spokesman said.

There were no casualties among the soldiers and the attack was repulsed," he said.

For the past few days the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels have focused their attacks on a relief column of 2,000 troops trying to reach the 800 men trapped at Elephant Pass.

Colombo newspapers said additional troops had been sent to join the reinforcements. Military sources refused to comment.

The independent Island newspaper quoted army Commander Hamilton Wanasinghe as saying troops were building up their reserves for the "final push" to the Elephant Pass camp.

The reinforcements were slow to advance because of heavy rebel resistance and mined roads, he said.

More than 930 rebels and 125 soldiers have been killed since July 10 when Tigers attacked the strategic camp on a stretch of land linking rebel-held Jaffna peninsula with the rest of the island.

Seven soldiers clearing a road in eastern Batticaloa district, where Tamil Tigers are also fighting their separatist campaign, were killed by a landmine Saturday, military sources said.

Vietnam assembly seeks to move out of party influence

HANOI (R) — Vietnam's parliament opened a session Saturday to draft far-reaching constitutional amendments giving it greater independence from the Communist Party and reducing its image as a rubber stamp body.

A parliamentary committee drafting the amendments would recommend changes to 104 of the 147 clauses in the current constitution, passed in 1980. President Vo Chi Cong told the 496 National Assembly delegates.

The new draft would give government bodies more administrative powers and make them more accountable, he said. He gave no details.

The National Assembly, long regarded as a rubber stamp, has accumulated more influence in recent years.

"This constitution lays out a more concrete legal framework for the rights and responsibilities of citizens," the president told the assembly, which meets twice a year.

The assembly would change some government titles, renaming the chairman of the council of ministers the prime minister, and changing the council of ministers to the cabinet.

The changes were apparently part of an effort to escape Socialist dogma, diplomats said. The moves could give the parliament more independence from the Communist Party.

The amendments would give more individual power and accountability to the prime minister and government officials. Tran Xuan Anh, head of the Foreign Affairs Department of the National Assembly's permanent office, said Friday.

Constitutional reforms were required to keep pace with widespread change in Vietnam, including its ambitious shift from a centrally planned to a market-guided economy, Mr. Cong said.

"The seventh party congress (in June) has received the opinion

of the people that we should amend our constitution, to make it suit our new circumstances," Mr. Cong said.

The new constitution would make clear Vietnam was a multi-sector economy, where private and collectively owned businesses as well as state enterprises would play an important role, he said.

The state sector dominated the 1980 constitution, which did not mention other forms of ownership.

Non-Communist, embassies said Hanoi has asked them to provide detailed outlines of their systems of government, apparently as a source of reference for its reforms.

However, Vietnam was committed to socialism, Communist Party General-Secretary Do Muoi reminded deputies as he stood in front of a large bust of Ho Chi Minh in the Ba Dinh Hall.

With socialism in crisis around

the world, Vietnam must quickly modernise its state structure, he said.

"The socialist system has entered a deep and global crisis," he said. "In some countries, Communist Parties have lost their right to govern the state and lead the society."

The party chief, elected at a congress last month, warned of the threat to Vietnam's Communist system from "reactionary forces."

"They have openly set the target to wipe out socialism in the world before the year 2000. The economic embargo and efforts to isolate our country have not been overcome. The tough competition in the world market has caused us not insignificant damage," Mr. Do Muoi said.

The National Assembly, which will be in session until Aug. 12, will also consider new laws on land use and environmental protection.

COLUMN

Liz Taylor to marry again — for last time

NEW YORK (R) — Elizabeth Taylor will marry a construction worker 20 years her junior in her eighth marriage in October, and this time the violet-eyed movie star, who will be given away by Michael Jackson, vows it will be forever. Singer Jackson Friday announced Taylor's engagement to construction work Larry Fortensky, 39, and said he will give the bride away at a ceremony at his palatial California estate, "Neverland Valley" on Oct. 5. Taylor has been married to six men including twice to the late actor Richard Burton. Fortensky, who has been married twice before, met the two-time Oscar winning actress in October 1988 when they were both receiving treatment at the Betty Ford Clinic in California. The clinic provides treatment for drug and alcohol dependency. "After being together for four years, Larry and I finally decided we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together," Taylor said in a statement released by her press spokeswoman Chen Sam. "Life is good and sweet, and we love each other and every day as it comes and want to share our happiness with family and friends. I always said I would get married one more time and with God's blessings, this is it, forever," Ms. Taylor said.

Mitterrand, British Queen 'are cousins'

LONDON (AP) — President Francois Mitterrand of France and Britain's Queen Elizabeth II are cousins who trace their common ancestry to the mother of King George I of England, Burke's Peerage has said. "Mitterrand and the queen are fourth or fifth cousins," publishing director Harold Brooks-Baker said in an interview. U.S. President George Bush and former President Ronald Reagan are also related to the queen, but Mr. Bush is a 13th cousin twice removed and Mr. Reagan is an even more distant cousin, he said. Mr. Bush is also a very distant cousin of Mr. Mitterrand, he added. Burke's Peerage researched Mr. Mitterrand's ancestry in 1981 when he became president, as it does all major heads of state, Brooks-Baker said. French genealogists, including some working with Burke's Peerage, have continued the research, he added. "We were surprised to find this kinship with the queen," Brooks-Baker said.

Burglar glues victim to fridge door

ROTHERHAM, England (R) — A disabled pensioner was stuck to her kitchen fridge with superglue by a raider who broke into her home, British police said. Edna Duke, 71, woke up when the man entered the bedroom of her home in the northern English town of Rotherham. He dragged her to the kitchen, smeared the instant-bonding adhesive on her hand and stuck it to the fridge. He then stole about £30 (\$50). After he left, the pensioner freed herself and raised the alarm. A police spokesman said: "It was a callous and mean crime."

9-year-old held, handcuffed for tossing rocks

THONOTOSASSA, Florida (AP) — Police arrested, handcuffed and hauled off a 9-year-old girl for tossing rocks at a playmate, who was injured when he swerved his go-cart into a parked truck, authorities said. Tammy Toloff, charged with aggravated assault, was whisked from her home Tuesday night in the back seat of a sheriff's cruiser. "He said, 'you have the right to remain silent,'" she recalled after her release. "I just said, 'dad, am I going to jail?'" Thirteen-year-old Joey Mendez suffered a cut leg in the accident. He was listed in fair condition following surgery. His father, Chico Mendez, called the arrest "ridiculous." "My boy and that girl are like brother and sister," he said. Deputy Howard Lopez said he "just followed the law" in arresting her. He said he read Tammy her rights and took her to be fingerprinted. "Kids throw rocks and kids shoot other kids with guns. They have to understand at this age, they're going to be held accountable for it," he said. The children were taking turns throwing the go-cart. When Joey's turn came, Tammy distracted him by throwing rocks. He then swerved into the truck, witnesses said.